GYPSY'S YEAR at the GOLDEN CRESCENT

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Ruth. E. B. Covell.
Grand Rapids.
Michigan.

From Mamma
Christmas 1904

Gypsy's Year at the Golden Crescent

By

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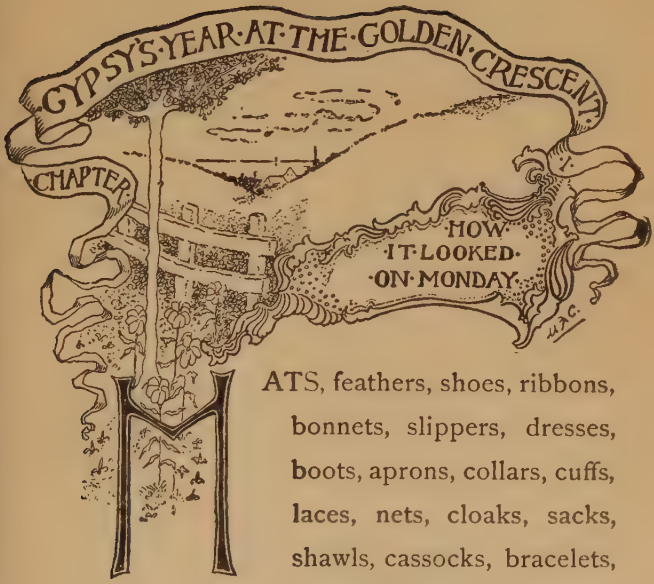


HATS, feathers, shoes, ribbons, bonnets, slippers, dresses, boots, aprons, collars, cuffs, laces, nets, cloaks, sacks, shawls, cassocks, bracelets, brooches, rings, rubbers, rubber-boots, stockings, veils, gloves, mittens, furs, fans, pictures, slates, books, paper, pencils, ink, needles, thread, thimbles, chalk, boxes, bags, baskets, a big trunk and a little trunk,—Gypsy down in the middle of the whole.

Her mother came slowly upstairs with a balmoral and two dresses over one arm, and a

bandbox in the other, opened the door, and stood transfixed.

"Oh, walk in, Mrs. Breynton, walk in! Don't be bashful. I'm quite ready to receive calls, — not, as you may say, exactly in full dress; but then — "

She was, by the way, in her white petticoat and little red flannel dressing-sack, with her hair all down on her shoulders; but velvet and valenciennes could not have made her look so pretty.

"Well, Gypsy, this *is* confusion worse confounded! What in the world are you doing?"

"Packing, to be sure."

Mrs. Breynton put the dresses on the bed and the bandbox under it, and sat down to laugh.

"Why! what's the joke?" said Gypsy, pushing her hair out of her eyes, and putting her chin into both her hands. "If ever anybody packed *hard!* that same 's myself, in the words of Miss Maloney! Did n't I empty every solitary drawer right out, — look in the

bureau and see, — and have n't I cleared the nails in the closet, and then did n't I take a whisk broom and brush off every individual thing from those horrid old wardrobe shelves, and keep standing on tiptoe and falling down and just rasping the tip end of my nose on the edges, and are n't they all here 'promiscuous'? I thought it was such a convenient way! You see, you won't have to keep running around to look for things — Why, what are you doing?"

Mrs. Breynton had busied herself during this long sentence in rapidly sorting the *mêlée*, putting cotton and linen in piles, hanging dresses across the foot of the bed, and laying laces and ribbons together carefully upon the pillows.

"Oh!" said Gypsy, with an accent.

"You see, my dear, that was the proper way."

"I see, I see, said the blind man; I see clearly. Now, mother, don't you tell, will you? but after it was all poured out, I *did n't* know — exactly — how I ever was going to pick out

one thing without picking out another thing, you know. Now, if that is n't charming! Why, they 'll pack themselves."

That they did not, however, exactly pack themselves, the gathering twilight testified, which, falling, found the two still hard at work.

"They won't begin to go into the large trunk," said Mrs. Breynton, pausing, with a folded cloak upon her arm. "I did hope they might."

"Oh, it 's just as well. Joy wrote me last week that boarding-school girls always had two trunks. You know she 's been at Miss Haine's, and she ought to know. Besides, she said she had a splendid time. Where 's my blue merino?"

"Here, in the left-hand corner. I hope that cologne is n't too near it; here, I 'll move it a little; you see?"

"Now, where 's my spotted veil? Oh, here; and my kid gloves? Now I wonder if it is n't time to put in the bonnet, mother. I wish —"

"Well?"

"What if that crown *should* look countrified? Miss Jones has such a talent for discovering the latest antediluvian fashion."

"Help me fold this skirt, Gypsy."

Gypsy, looking up sidewise through her hair, saw that her mother had something to say, but not just then.

"Where is that pair of merino stockings? Why, Gypsy!"

"I know it — I did mean to. I thought they were mended as much as could be."

"Hand me my work-basket — on the table. Now thread me a needle, please, as fast as you know how; it is growing dark."

"And you're all tired out!" said Gypsy, in a little spasm of compunction.

"What is going to become of your stockings at school, Gypsy?" asked Mrs. Breynton, sewing away with her quiet smile.

"Mother Breynton, that is a solemn question!"

Mrs. Breynton folded the stockings and stuffed them tightly into a corner of the trunk,

and Gypsy shook back her hair, and put her chin into her hands once more.

"Come, mother, give me a little lecture, please. It will be so long before I can have another."

"I believe you know my lecture by heart, Gypsy; you've heard it ever since you were a baby, and there is only one word to it."

"Hum–m!" said Gypsy, slowly, and put on the cover to her collar-box in silence. She knew what the word was. If you do not, you must guess.

"About the bonnet," — Gypsy dropped the collar-box, and came and sat down on the floor just below her mother's knee, — "I've done the best I could for you, in the way of clothing, but I think it more than probable that the majority of the girls will be more fashionably dressed. It is best to look at the matter just as it is."

Gypsy nodded.

"Anything which a little altering can bring into style, why, you know I shall have all your

vacation in which to do. As for the rest, dear — "

"As for the rest," interrupted Gypsy, with another nod, "if I minded it, I should deserve to be toted off to Siberia in a bandbox! If I jump on the little trunk, would you lock it, please?"

"Besides," she observed in a comfortable sort of undertone, as she tugged at the straps, "if they *do* wear high crowns, I could get some little pieces of velvet and poke it up myself."

Gypsy, like most girls, seldom swallowed undiluted morsels without a little secret sugar of her own.

"You don't suppose it is possible that we have everything in! Where's the circular? Let me see. 'Young ladies are expected to bring a counterpane, four towels *marked*, three pillow-cases *marked*, a napkin ring *marked*, an umbrella, rubbers, waterproof' — all right. I do believe we've come to the end."

"Yes; one or two things drying by the

kitchen fire, and then the dressing-case in the morning; that is all, I believe," said Mrs. Breynton, thinking. Gypsy jumped on the large trunk to see if it would lock easily, gathered the pieces of newspaper and old box covers and old gloves with which the floor was strewn, into a heap for Patty to sweep away, and then came and sat down again by her mother's knee.

Mrs. Breynton began to twist about her finger a lock of the bright hair that fell about the child's face; it fell so low as nearly to hide it; besides, it was now quite dark.

"Sober, Gypsy?"

"No, *ma'am!*"

"Then you expect to have a nice time?"

"I guess I do! I've been just crazy to go to college ever since we packed Tom off Freshman; and if the horrid old men won't let girls have colleges, — you see *I* don't call a place where they learn how to dance and play and sew and talk French a college, — why, then, boarding-school is the next best thing, and

I'm in for it, *thorough*, as — who was it? Henry the First? used to say in that funny little English History with the magenta cover."

"Gypsy! It is high time for your education to be looked after; that is evident. I would suggest, by the way, that you write a composition on Strafford, my dear."

"Oh, well! why isn't one name as good as another? It's all the same in Dutch, as Tom says to me. Well, anyway, I am going to have a good time."

"And not be homesick a bit?"

"*No*, ma'am! — that is to say — n–no–oo."

Gypsy was particularly engaged at that moment in wondering why she had never noticed what a soft hand her mother had, and in thinking that it must be time to light the lamps.

Mrs. Breynton's touch rested a moment still upon the bright falling hair, and it fell lower down about Gypsy's face.

"Gypsy, I've been thinking — I could tell you much about this new school life, but if it

looks so bright, I don't know, — I never could even bear to wake you up in the morning if you were having a pretty dream."

"But if you did n't, I should lose my breakfast, you know," said Gypsy, sitting up straight.

"Yet if you could learn to wake yourself up, it would be better for you."

"Then you don't think I am going to have a nice time?"

"The best of times, and the most dangerous."

Gypsy sat up straighter, and looked intensely incredulous.

"It is a little hard to let you go out of my arms," said Mrs. Breynton, slowly, "right out all at once; yet, letting you go, I must give you a wide sweep. In a certain sense you must live without me."

Gypsy gave her a squeeze, and said she 'd see about that.

"I think, after all," said her mother, after a moment's thought, "that I have but one piece

of advice to give; it rests with you to fit particulars to it."

"But what is the advice?"

"That you sit down every night a few minutes, and tell me, in your heart, just as if we were sitting together as we are now —"

"You stroking my hair," interrupted Gypsy.

"I stroking your hair, if you like, and tell me what has happened since morning, and what you suppose will happen to-morrow."

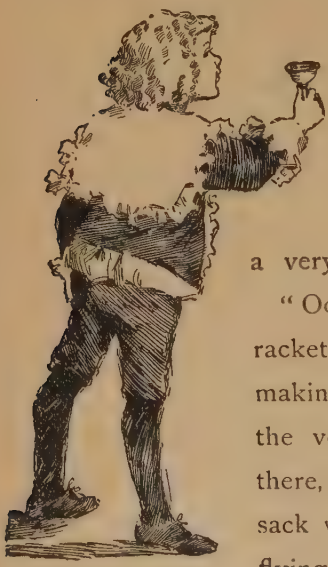
"Want me to promise?" asked Gypsy, after some thinking.

"Just as you like."

"Well, I'll promise; it will be a sort of string, you know; a little piece of sewing-silk. I never tried to break sewing-silk in my life without cutting my fingers. Mother, you have something else to say; it's so dark I can't see much of you but just your eyes, and I know by the way they're looking out of the window."

"One thing more, yes. I want you to have a little talk every night with Somebody else besides me, dear."

Just at that moment Winnie began to ring the tea-bell, and he made such a noise about it that Gypsy did not try to answer, but her mother felt in the dark two soft pats on her hand which she seemed to think were as good as words. At least she caught her up in her arms and gave her a very long kiss.



"Oo–oo–ooh! What a racket that little scamp is making! I 'm going to write the very first night I get there, and here I am in my sack with every solitary hair flying, and you 'll be all through supper, and I 'm not going to be homesick a bit, you know, and *would* you mind wringing Winnie's neck when you go downstairs?" said Gypsy, a little incoherently. It was unaccountable, to be sure; but as she

flew about in the dark, whisking her hair into her net, tossing on her dress, losing all her combs behind the bureau, and dropping the soap into the water-pitcher, she certainly *did* wonder if Joy could possibly have made a mistake about boarding-school. But that was only for a minute.

It is a great thing to have a pleasant tea-table; and I believe that was what Mrs. Breynton's tea-table always was. Everything about it seemed to fit, like the notes of a beautiful tune. In the first place there seemed to be a tacit understanding that people should say something pleasant, or not talk at all. No cross words ever came from behind the teacups, and, as a consequence, a cross word from anywhere else made such a jar that it was as much as one's peace of mind was worth for an evening. Then the silver was always bright, and the warm colours of the plaided supper-cloth, and Mrs. Breynton used to wear a bit of ribbon or fine lace with her "afternoon dress," and the room was flooded with the

soft light of porcelain-shaded lamps. Besides, all the work and worry and lessons of the day were over, and there was nothing but reading and play and chatter to come.

It was very pleasant, that night, and so Gypsy thought, when she had exchanged the red flannel sack for her pretty gray travelling-dress with the blue trimmings, — the only dress now outside of the trunks, — and coming in just as her father was asking the blessing, stopped a moment in the doorway and looked around, — very pleasant. But then, she was so happy that night that almost anything would have looked pleasant. Her eyes were dancing behind their long lashes, her cheeks were afire with excitement, and as for her dimple, it seemed to twinkle all over her face.

"Well, my dear," said her father, laying down his fork, "you don't look as if your heart were breaking."

"Not so much as a crack, sir. Why, griddle-cakes! Mother, you blessed little woman! If that is n't just like you!"

"I thought they would taste good, your last night, dear; here, Patty has just brought these in hot. Sugar, or maple? Winnie, pass her the butter. See, they are done brown just as you like them."

She does not say that she has been out herself to cook them just as Gypsy liked them, nor what the kitchen fire had done to the headache left by the hard day's packing; but Gypsy knows. Ah, yes, Gypsy knows.

There is a queer, quick droop of her eyes, and for three whole minutes she has not a word to say. That little promise made upstairs in the dark is riveted into its place by — who would have thought it? — a griddle-cake. "My mother is all wound up together," Gypsy writes sometimes to her cousin Joy. "All the big things and all the little things are tangled into each other, and I don't believe she knows the difference."

After the three minutes are over, Gypsy begins to talk again, and Gypsy always has plenty to say, and the silver flashes, and the

light deepens and glows through the soft white shades, and her mother's face smiles in it behind the tea-things; everybody talks a great deal, but nobody says much about to-morrow. Gypsy misses Tom, and wishes he were there to say good-bye with the rest, and Winnie's kitty curls up into her arms and tries to put her cold nose down her neck, and there is a scarlet maple which she notices, fluttering softly in the wind against the window-glass.

She feels these things and remembers them with very much such a sensation as if she were going to heaven to find something sublimely superior to them all, yet with a wistful tenderness clinging to the tried and proved. Snapberry griddle-cakes *may* be as melting and brown as these, to be sure. Supper at the Golden Crescent will doubtless have something to take the place of her father's stories and Winnie's escapades with his mug of milk, if one only knew what. Mrs. McMunn's eyes may be as well worth looking at as her

mother's, but she should like to have "the evidence on 't."

When she has thought as far as this, over goes Winnie's milk, splash! all down his neck and up his jacket sleeve, and out goes the big book which helped him to fill out his chair, and up jumps Winnie, strangling, gasping, red in the face.

"Oh — I never — hum! look here! I can't swallow *either way!* I 've got a crumb in my breath-pipe!"

Gypsy laughs at this, — laughs more than usual, — and supper ends merrily.

"The middle of March," her father says, as they stand there all together in the lamplight; "what a long time to wait!"

But Gypsy does not think it long. Besides, Mrs. McMunn may give them a day or two at the holidays when Tom is at home.

She listens to her father's evening prayer, but wonders a little between the sentences who her room-mate will be. She goes up herself to put Winnie to bed, because it is her last night,

and she has promised him a story. She had expected to begin to feel sober and wonder what girls did at school without any little brother to tease; but Winnie is very sleepy,

and when he tries to say his prayers, goes all the way through "Baa, baa, black sheep," and does n't know the difference.

Bedtime comes early for her, too, for waking

time must be early to-morrow; so she kisses her mother good-night with an extra squeeze, and steals away to bed to dream till morning of this beautiful new future which is coming.

Of what it will be like, she has a few ideas. There will be no dishes to wash, no errands to do. Somebody will dust her room for her. The dinners will be very much like the dinners at a large hotel, probably, and there will always be hot biscuit for supper. She will wear long dresses, and go to the bank and draw her own checks.

There will always be a girl at hand to talk all night with, if she wants to. There will be a great many "scrapes" to keep out of or — fall into. There will be a few books, and a composition class, and she expects to study — some.

IN the first place it rained.

Gypsy woke at half-past five to find her room filled with gray gloom, and to hear an ominous, pattering sound upon the leaden piazza roof.

Her mother, coming in to call her, found her shivering in her night-dress at the window, her face pressed up against the glass, down which sluggish streams of rain were rolling and collecting in little puddles on the sill. Outside, huge clouds of mist were drifting about and

settling to the ground, and the leaves of the maples hung dull and drenched.

"Ugh!" said Gypsy, shrugging her shoulders. That really seemed to be the only thing there was to say. She liked a journey in an easterly storm no better than most people, and had certainly made up her mind to have the sun shine. Moreover, she had cherished secret expectations of looping her dress over a certain pretty white skirt that hung in the closet; white always is and always must be so much more ladylike-looking than anything else. Now there was nothing to look forward to but a balmoral.

It was not over-pleasant to hear the driving of the rain as she locked the last trunk, fastened the last pin, and turned, cape and hat and little bag over her arm, to take the last look around her deserted room before she shut the door. She wished that the wind would not blow so while she sat eating her breakfast; and her mother, softly busy about her luncheon, stopped to stroke her cheek a little.

She felt very sure that the driver had come too early when his long sharp ring pealed through the house, and he ran clattering up-stairs and clattering downstairs with the trunks,

and Patty came from the kitchen wiping her hands on her apron to say good-bye; and when the last words came upon the steps, and sleepy Winnie, who had to pry both fists into his eyes

to keep them open, insisted that he was "crying because Gypsy's gone off to a Boarded School;" when her mother, with wet eyelashes and face a little pale, caught her up into her arms once, twice, and once again, and her father, looking straight ahead, went down the path holding the umbrella carefully over her. She stopped a moment on the carriage steps, half in and half out, the rain whisking against the pretty gray travelling-dress, where her waterproof blew aside, her face turned back towards the house, — a rather forlorn-looking little Gypsy. The first they knew, she had jumped right out into the rain, and was up the path and the steps, her arms about her mother's neck.

"Oh, mother, mother, mother! I love you *hard!*"

And the year at the Golden Crescent began to look a little misty.

It was a day's journey to the little Massachusetts town of Snapberry. You did not know that there was such a town? Very well; find

it on the map — if you can. It is there, whether you find it or not; only it happens to be a little differently spelled.

Nothing of any importance happened on the way, except that Gypsy could not get her baggage checked, and lost her luncheon out of the car-window, and once walked straight into the smoking-car. Though a very courageous, she was not a very old traveller.

It poured all day. Gypsy patronised the "popcorn boy" till she could eat no more, bought a Harper's Weekly and looked at the pictures, read a remarkable story by Cousin Somebody of a young lady who climbed into a burning house to save her lover, watched the people in the car till she knew them by heart and had made up a story for every one of them, counted the telegraph poles till she was dizzy, and at last, as the twilight began to fall, leaned her forehead against the side of the window and idly watched the storm, the driving rain, the gusts of wind tossing the leaves about, the muddy pools collected by the

tracks, the drenched figures loitering at the stations, the soaked meadows, soaked fences, soaked grass trying to grow in the shade of brick walls and bridges, dripping umbrellas, dripping roofs, dripping trees,—her face catching a bit of dreariness from it as she looked. There was a bright fire in the parlor now at home; Winnie was picking up his blocks to be ready for father's coming home early from the store; mother had gone out to the kitchen to see Patty about supper; she would take her knitting when she came back, and the little hair-cloth rocking-chair; down at her feet there would be a cricket with nobody on it.

The year at the Golden Crescent looked decidedly gray.

The train was due at Snapberry at six o'clock. A young lady came in about half-past five from one of the junctions where she had been waiting, and took a seat a little in front of Gypsy. She had on a very pretty bonnet, and Gypsy, glad to have something else than that cricket at home to think of, sat up straight and

looked at it. It was a brown travelling straw with a brown feather, neither very simple nor very showy, but with that indescribable something about it which girls call "*so* stylish," and which means more than conformity of shape and trimming to the prevailing mode. There was a spray of pink heather inside, which fell against a mass of black hair, — black as onyx, Gypsy could see from the side glimpses which she had when the light struck it.

The young lady's dress, a brown mozambique, softly shaded off around the skirt by a heavy fold of browner silk, though covered by her cloak, and decorously looped over her dainty white skirt, was yet sufficiently visible for one to remark upon its elegance.

Her very waterproof, finished at the throat by a high tucked linen collar, and thrown gracefully back from her free arms, had more of an "air" about it than would velvet upon nine-tenths of the people who wear it.

It was also observable, as she slightly turned her head, and the curve of her cheek was out-

lined in rich dark carmine, that the pink feather was chosen with a studied aptitude of tints.

It is an "old saw," almost worn out in these days of high wages and bead trimmings, that a lady can always be recognised by her dress. Perhaps the trimmed skirt was a little rich for such a dingy, muddy, dripping day, but there was something about the *tout ensemble* of this young lady with which Gypsy was pleased. There was, however, one exception. She wore a pair of light, very light, kid gloves. Whether this was a notch in the saw, could not be decided at once.

When she had been a little while in the car, she turned around to speak to the conductor, and Gypsy could see her face fully. Her first impression was that it was a very handsome face, and as Gypsy liked to watch handsome faces much as she liked to watch pictures, she looked at it every chance she had, till the whistle sounded for Snapberry. Her second impression was that it was a handsome face without the "very;" her third, that handsome

was not the word. A striking face it certainly was. There was an abundance of that oynx-like hair; good eyes, — full, black, expressive; the mouth, however, was peculiar, — it was well shaped, with warm, rich colour in the lips, but something, one could scarcely tell what, was the matter with it.

As the train shrieked into Snapberry, and Gypsy was putting on her gloves, she observed the young lady take down her little bag from the rack above her head. When Snapberry passengers left the cars, she left with them.

Gypsy stepped out into the pouring rain upon the uncovered platform of the little wooden depot, with a great sinking sense of loneliness. Wet umbrellas spattered into her face, and wet overcoats brushed against her; wet baggage-men were slamming wet trunks about, and a *very* wet little girl who stood upon the platform was crying because nobody had come to meet her. Gypsy, seeking for the Ladies' Room, ran against a little coachman with a moustache, who agreed to carry her to

the Golden Crescent, and appeared to be the only arrangement for such case made and provided.

The Ladies' Room consisted of a floor, and a bench running around a wall. It contained a very smoky kerosene lamp, and one old lady in a poke-bonnet. Gypsy sat down on the bench and winked very hard, first at the lamp, and then at the old lady. While she was waiting there for the coachman to find her trunks, the wet little girl was brought in by a dripping father, held warmly in his arms, with his kisses dropping on her forehead.

"Did Dolly think papa 'd forgotten her?" Gypsy heard him say; and it seemed as if the great sinking would take away her breath.

Presently the little coachman came in, jingling a check.

"Can't find but one of yer trunks, mum; the big un 's here, but there 's no signs of t' other."

"My little trunk! — not here!"

"No, mum, it hain't. Dy'er thinks it 's got

took to the Junction, an' will be 'long down the fust train in the morning; you jest take your check and stick to 't, and you'll git it, no danger. This way, mum, this way."

Gypsy followed him out into the rain, with a very sober face.

It is not exactly a cheering thing to lose one's baggage in bright sunlight. Now, in the dark and loneliness and strangeness, it seemed to be the straw that broke the camel's back. What would her mother say? And what should she do for the very dress which she had meant to wear to-morrow morning? And what if the trunk did not come back by the "fust train" or any train? — and that Honiton collar! and the corn-coloured necktie! *and* that bridle with bead fringe!

Gypsy found several girls in the coach before her. One was the young lady with the heather in her bonnet and the Mozambique dress. Just before the door was shut, the driver handed in a pretty girl with light hair and very small hands; she muttered some-

thing about it's being scandalously crowded, and swept into the only vacant seat, beside this young lady. She wore no waterproof, and her showy travelling-suit was drenched and spattered with mud; the other, either by accident or design, moved away a little into the corner, and gathered her cloak closely about her. The new-comer saw the act and turned sharply, some words upon her lips, which she apparently found difficulty in restraining. The two girls eyed each other for a moment with that sort of dislike which comes — and goes too, sometimes — by instinct, but neither spoke.

The coach was dimly and drearily lighted, the rain pattering in a dismal style upon the drawn windows, and Gypsy noted these things by way of something to think about.

There were two girls — old scholars, evidently — upon the back seat, chatting merrily with each other. It never occurred to them that the new-comers might feel strange and homesick, and glad to be spoken to; so they had all the talking to themselves.

Presently, however, the young lady in the Mozambique turned around with a smile to Gypsy, and asked if she were going to the Golden Crescent.

"Yes," said Gypsy; "is it *very* dreadful, do you think?"

"I don't know," said the young lady; "I am a new scholar too."

"Oh!"

"Did n't I see you in the cars, I wonder?"

"Did you? Well, I saw you, and I'm much obliged for your bonnet."

"Obliged for my bonnet?"

"Yes; you see I came *just* about as near being homesick! and when your bonnet walked in, it was so pretty I had to sit up and look at it."

The young lady laughed, and looked very much amused; not ill-pleased, either, it seemed.

The rest of the girls had by this time all grown quiet to listen to the conversation, and Gypsy, hearing a little laugh go round, shrank back, somewhat appalled, into the dark.

Fifteen minutes' ride brought them to a high white house surrounded by large grounds and many trees. Gypsy could see them dimly through the rain, as she jumped from the coach door at a bound, regardless of the helping hand of the little coachman. Her acquaintance of the cars came down more sedately, but seemed quite able to take care of herself. The pretty girl made a great commotion; she handed her umbrella to one, and thrust her bag into the lap of another, and caught her crinoline upon the steps, and must needs scream about it, gave the driver both her very little hands, and finally allowed him to lift her to the ground. Little things make great impressions, and Gypsy noticed.

A lady whom she concluded must be Mrs. McMunn met the girls in the hall, shook hands with each in turn, asked their names, and sent a servant to show them their rooms. Gypsy was taken to the third story, and shown into a room by herself.

It was a low, small room, with one good-

sized window, an indescribable carpet, plain furniture, brown papering, no pictures, and a bare mantelpiece.

Somebody brought up her trunk; she unlocked it as she would unlock a trunk in a dream, and dressed herself for supper with her eyes shut, so as not to see that lonely, bare mantelpiece and the staring walls; they had the singular effect of making her feel as if she were going to choke.

Presently a strange girl knocked at the door, said that supper was ready, and went away again.

Gypsy found her way down through the crooked entries to the first floor, where she encountered her friend of the coach.

"Oh, is that you? Good! We'll go in together," said the young lady, drawing Gypsy's arm through hers. Gypsy was pleased. She had dreaded to walk the length of the long dining-hall alone, and she was glad to have somebody to speak to. She did not say so, but there was a little grateful snap to her eyes, which the young lady saw, and she slipped her

arm about her waist, with a half-confidential, half-patronising air, laughing.

"It is an undertaking to walk down a dining-hall, but we won't look green if we *are* new scholars, will we, Miss —"

"There isn't any Miss about it. I'm just Gypsy Breynton."

"Gypsy Breynton! Gypsy Breynton! What an odd name! Did your mother find it in a book? Well, I'm Maude Clare."

Gypsy thought that Maude Clare was a very pretty name, and said so; which Maude Clare appeared to like.

"I don't see what they call this the Golden Crescent for," said Gypsy, as they passed the length of the table, arm-in-arm, to the seats which Mrs. McMunn pointed out to them.

"I believe there are some yellow maples or something on the hill behind the house," said Maude Clare; and then in a whisper as they sat down, "Plated forks! did you ever?"

"Never," said Gypsy, without a very clear idea what she was talking about; and the next

she knew, Mrs. McMunn was asking the blessing.

The supper was good, but the table was long and somewhat dimly lighted, and the girls looked homesick and cold. Maude Clare talked a good deal.

When Gypsy went up to her room after tea, she was surprised and disappointed to find a quiet, rather plain girl in black there, unpacking a bag. She and Maude Clare had been hoping that they should room together.

She walked over to the window, and stood looking out, with her forehead on the glass. It was raining still, and the wind was blowing bitterly. A little hill rolled up just behind the house from the garden; on its top, through the darkness, she could faintly see the outline, high against the sky, of a curve of tossing trees.

"I should like to know where the Golden comes in, anyway," she said drearily.

"The old girls say it's beautiful in the sun," said the quiet room-mate, creeping into bed.

Gypsy pulled down the curtain, and began to undress with a jerk.

Long after she was in bed, with her eyes shut, she seemed to see the black mantelpiece and the staring, pictureless walls, and the trees

tossing out in the rain. Long after she was in bed, she saw the fire in the parlour grate at home, the little hair-cloth rocking-chair, and the empty cricket. The room-mate, who was not Maude Clare, was crying softly — though that she did not know — on the pillow beside her.

The year at the Golden Crescent began to look very black.

MY BLESSED LITTLE MOTHER, — You never did! No, I know you never did, for all the people you went to boarding-school with wear little pugs to their hair behind, and have a baby with whooping-cough ; besides, there wasn't any Maude Clare.

I think it's perfectly mag. at the Golden Crescent, and I'll tell you why. It poured pitchforks all day Tuesday, — that is n't why, but I'm coming to it sometime, if I live long enough, and don't forget it, — and you 'd better believe that I had on blue — very delicate sky-

blue — spectacles before night. Besides, I lost my luncheon, and was hungry enough to eat stewed marbles. Then I had to go and lose my trunk on top of it, and when that man came in jingling the check, did n't I want to see you?

The trunk came back from the Junction Wednesday morning turned topsy-turvy, with the cork out of the cologne bottle. I mean the trunk was topsy-turvy, not Wednesday morning. Mrs. McMunn says I 'm careless with my commas. I meant to have written before, just as much as could be, — that little scrap I sent off Wednesday, just to let you know I was alive, was n't anything, — but there has n't been a minute. I have to study, and then Maude Clare comes in. But here I 've written three pages, and have n't told you a thing you want to know, and father will have such a quantity of questions about Mrs. McMunn and all. Let me see: —

Snapberry is a town situated somewhere in Massachusetts, upon the Snapberry River. It

has five thousand inhabitants, six stores, three churches, a bridge, a dépôt, and a *large* number of minute boys with their mouths open. It is celebrated for its little coachmen, brown sugar, and pretty girls.

The Golden Crescent is a select family school for young ladies; but twenty admitted, and usually nineteen on hand; young ladies expected to supply their own napkin-rings, pillow-cases, and — Oh, I forgot, there is a *beau*-tiful row of yellow maples over on a hill behind the house, shaped just like a quarter of a moon, and when I woke up Wednesday morning, they were all blowing about in the sun, as if they were on fire.

Mrs. McMunn is a widow, or else she is n't, and I don't know which. The girls say she was divorced from her husband, and that he is living somewhere; but they say she never speaks of him any more than if she had never had any. Mrs. McMunn is the funniest! I really can't think of anything she looks like, but a barrel walking about with a very large Baldwin apple

for a head. She is so stout — the same size all the way up to her neck, — and her cheeks are so red, and then she is freckled. Besides, her kid gloves don't fit, and her waterfall sticks out like a little feather, ever so far from her neck, and when she shakes her head at the girls, it nods about; they cut up, just so as to see it go. Besides, I can make her laugh, and then she sobers down and says, "Too much levity, Miss Breynton, too much levity," and then I nearly go off; when I laugh, the other girls all have to go and laugh too; I 'm sure I don't see what 's the reason.

Then there is Mademoiselle. It is so funny to hear her talk English. I don't see much of her, except in French Reader, and she is very quiet and stays in her own room. I don't know whether she 's lonely, or what. One girl in the class insists on calling *le chat*, lee shat, and puts poor Mademoiselle in an agony. Every time the cat is round, she will say, "*Comment s'appelle-t-il ce bête là*, Miss Holly?" and poor Miss Holly stammers and blushes, and is sure

she has it right now, till she and the *shat* are sent off in disgrace.

There are two other teachers, Miss Ayre and Chaplain Goss. Chaplain Goss attends prayers and Mathematics; he wears green spectacles, and has a cough; the girls plague him half out of his life, and when he wants to make them mind, he snaps his fingers at them: I do believe he knows that Algebra by heart, though, anyway. You ought to have seen him look at me this morning, when I said x was equal to $3\frac{1}{2}$, and it ought to have been something else, I 'm sure I don't know what. My! you would have thought I was a chicken just out of the shell, running round with horrid little half-grown feathers on.

Miss Ayre teaches Latin, Botany, and all those sorts of things. She talks

on a funny little squeak; she 's as thin as a pin and as cross as a bear. She always acts as if she were trying to make up for Mrs. McMunn, and she scolds when Mrs. McMunn laughs at the girls.

Mrs. McMunn teaches History, and the big girls who are finishing up on Mental Philosophy and Butler. What is Butler, — some sort of a geography? She 's very pleasant, if she only *would* take down that waterfall.

Oh, I forgot Mr. Schleiermacher, the music-teacher. He has a moustache and a diamond ring, and the girls put on their best dresses days when they take a music-lesson. I asked Maude Clare one day what she did it for, and she said her other was torn.

And now I 've come to Maude Clare — my beautiful, darling, *precious* Maude Clare. Is n't it a lovely name? and does n't it sound just exactly like a novel? She says her mother found it in a book somewhere, and that it was the name of an heiress who was carried off by the Indians, and she had ever so many lovers, and they all came after her and brought her back; I believe she married one of them with a rich uncle, and they went to Europe for their wedding tour. I think it must be a splendid story. Maude Clare says she had such *passionate* eyes.

Maude Clare is splendid. She is as handsome as she can be, and so *stylish* — why, you have n't any idea! She has more things just for this fall than I have in two years.

Jacqueline Delancey does n't think Maude is pretty, but that is just because she is pretty herself. I don't like Jacqueline Delancey. I saw her in the coach and I knew I should n't. She is afraid of things, and screams. Then she has little bits of hands and is always showing them off. Then she runs down Maude Clare.

I like to watch Maude Clare dress. She moves her hands about in such a pretty way. She looks at my things sometimes out of the corners of her eyes, but she never laughs at them, the way Jack Delancey does, and that 's one reason why I like her. I don't mind being laughed at a bit, but then I 'd rather not.

Maude Clare and I are going to be friends all our lives long, and she thinks ever so much of me, and I think ever so much of her. I like to braid her hair for her. She has seen ever so many gentlemen, and they all thought a great

deal of her, and she tells me about them and she does n't tell another soul.

She and I are never going to marry, because we never could love our husbands as much as we do each other. Besides, I 'd a great deal rather have her than a husband, and besides, I would n't be married anyway. I think it 's horrid. Maude Clare and I always go to walk together, and I sit by her at table.

I 'd give the world if we were room-mates, but Mrs. McMunn won't let us change now. Maude Clare rooms with poor Miss Holly on the second floor, and I 'm up here with Jane Bruce. Jane Bruce is very good, I guess, but she 's homely and she does n't talk. She 's in mourning, but I never asked her for whom. I don't see much of her anyway, for we go right to sleep at night, and I 'm always in Maude Clare's room out of study-hours. Maude likes to have me go down there because she says the stairs are crooked, and she does n't like to climb up.

Jo Courtis is another girl I know a little.

Her name is Josephine, but the girls call her Jo. She came from the West somewhere, and she talks very loud, and says funny things. When they don't call her Jo they call her Courtis, and she *does* seem like a boy. But then I sort of like her.

There's a lame girl named Phœbe Hand, who rooms on the first floor. She's pale, and always looks frightened. I haven't seen much of her. There are a good many others, but most of them are in Jack Delancey's set, and I don't go with them.

Mrs. Holt is the housekeeper, and she's cross. Nancy and Dolly are the Irish girls, and Nancy gave me some cold rice-pudding last night.

I study Algebra and French and Latin; next term I'm going to take Roman History. I only take one music-lesson a week, as you said, so I only have to give an hour a day to practising. I told Mr. Schleiermacher that you wanted me to give most of my time to my lessons, because that was what I came to school for.

I don't think I have to study very hard.

I was so homesick I thought I should go crazy Tuesday night, but Wednesday the sun shone, and Maude Clare made me laugh. I am having a splendid time, and think boarding-school 's the nicest thing in the world.

Please pull father's whiskers for me, and give Winnie a squeeze. I wrote to Tom yesterday.

I have n't forgotten what I promised you up in my room in the dark. I 've gone to work and had a regular talk with you every night since I've been here. Last night I 'd been eating peanuts all study-hours, and did n't want to a bit; but I did. I don't mean to eat any peanuts to-night.

Your letter was magnificent. I 'm sorry Sarah Rowe has the measles. Do write very soon again to

Your horrid little GYPSY.

P. S. Maude Clare says Jacqueline Delancey is no lady, because she tries to show off her diamond ring; it was only her father who gave

it to her, but she wears it on ner first finger, and tries to make people think she is engaged.

Maude Clare is very particular, and would n't do an unladylike thing for a good deal. She means to make her father give her a diamond next Christmas.

P. S. No. 2. The girls won't believe I wear my own hair, so I have to take it down and run round with it hanging, to let them see.

GYPSY was standing one morning at her window, watching that crescent of yellow maples, when Jacqueline Delancey called her.

Those maples, by the way, were well worth watching. The light fell under them from the east, where the sun climbed the little hill, cutting the outline of each separate leaf in flame. The wind and the frost had begun to twist off their rich, ripe stems, and the air was filled with them; down on the grass, where the hoar-frost was heavy, they blazed like jewels. The swell of the curve was marked and rounded out by three blood-red trees, and the whole stood out

sharply against a deep October sky. Gypsy always brought her books to this window, and did, I am inclined to think, quite as much look-

ing as studying. She spent much of her play-time at this window, and sometimes forgot here even Maude Clare. It held a spell for her.

But Jacqueline Delancey was calling.

"Gypsy! Gypsy Breynton! Courtis, where is she? Has anybody seen her? Miss Breynton! Gypsy!"

"Here!" cried Gypsy, turning away with an impatient start from the window; the maples and Miss Delancey did not suit exactly. "Here I am. What's up?"

Jacqueline Delancey climbed the last stair, flew along the passage and through Gypsy's opened door, with her breath gone. She tapped her throat with her pretty hands — it was a fine opportunity to show them — and sat down panting.

"Well, you seem to be in a hurry," said Gypsy, eyeing her not very hospitably. "Don't sit on the bed, please. I don't like my bed tumbled. Take a chair by the fire?"

Miss Delancey concluded that it was time to stop panting, took the chair, and observed in a very impressive manner that she had something to tell her.

"Tell away," said Gypsy.

"What do you suppose Maude Clare's name is?"

"Maude Clare, to be sure," said mystified Gypsy.

"It's Maude Clare as far as it goes, but that is n't the whole."

"Not the whole!"

"No, I guess it is n't! She has another name, and she's ashamed of it — I'm sure I don't blame her, for the matter of that," said Miss Delancey, making a gigantic effort to look sarcastic, with about the success that a wax doll would have under similar circumstances. "But to think of her being ashamed of it, and trying to hide it from people, — and that's your paragon of a Miss Maude Clare!"

"I don't believe it!" said Gypsy, more warmly than politely.

"Oh, you need n't believe it unless you choose; it does n't concern me. I thought you'd like to know it, that's all, and I heard Mademoiselle call her by it, in Racine this morning — you ought to have seen Maude

look! — so, if you won't take my word, you may take hers."

"What is the name?"

"Go and ask her yourself," said Miss Delancey, triumphantly.

Gypsy hurried away to Maude Clare, and indignantly told the story as "Jack Delancey's latest."

Maude Clare coloured.

"Why — you — don't —" began Gypsy.

"Well, I suppose I do; but I should like to know what business it is of Jacqueline Delancey's if I choose to call myself Zerubbabel!"

"Then Maude Clare is n't your real name?"

"Of course. You don't suppose I 'd say so if it were n't!"

"But you have another, and it is n't pretty, and so you leave it off," said Gypsy, in a maze. Maude Clare nodded and looked cross. Gypsy asked what it was.

"*Smith*," said Maude Clare, faintly.

Jacqueline Delancey had made a point, and, as this young lady very seldom *did* make a

point, she whittled it to its sharpest, and stuck it into Maude Clare then and thenceforward whenever occasion offered.

No one word was oftener on her lips, with cough and laugh and sneer, and *double entendre*, in season and out of season, than this poor little word of five letters, which made Maude Clare's pretty brows blacken like a thundercloud, and Maude Clare's keen tongue (of which Miss Delancey was secretly in fear, having felt its edge more than once) keep silence. Partly for the joke of the thing, partly from unconscious imitation, the rest of the girls fell into the way, as long as Maude Clare remained at the Golden Crescent, of pronouncing the unfortunate name as Maude Clare's rival did, and of writing it as they pronounced it,— *Maude Clare — Smith*, with a pause of mock respect at the dash that was indescribable.

Boarding-school was not pure Paradise, after all. Gypsy found this out in due time. She enjoyed the fun and chatter and novelty, "wearing long dresses and drawing her own

checks," having no errands to do, and Mrs. McMunn's waterfall to laugh at. She soon found herself — for some unaccountable reason which she spent her whole year at the Crescent trying to find out — everybody's pet and favourite; and her lessons, to put it moderately, could not be said to be so severe a strain upon her intellect as to endanger health or reason. As for home, — why, she missed it, to be sure, but the holidays were coming sometime. Then she never felt very far away from her mother; beginning, as she did in the morning, to treasure up things for that talk with her at night; very often the talk was put into a letter, but, written or spoken, Gypsy felt it a reality.

But still over her merry days there fell now and then a little shade.

Maude Clare had plenty of money. So had Jacqueline; so had the rest. It was an expensive school, and attracted the notice of wealthy parents. Gypsy and a small minority of three or four must economise, sometimes closely. The girls were for the most part too

ladylike to taunt her with this, but they reminded her of it, by no means infrequently; sometimes unnecessarily, always painfully.

One day a little knot of them gathered in Josephine Courtis' room, discussing each other's pretty things. Josephine's winter cloak had just come from home by express.

"It 's early for it, to be sure," she said, shaking out the heavy folds, "but I can't go the buttons on my sacque; they look as if they were handed down from Mrs. Japhet."

"Why, I 'm sure they were only a summer style," said Gypsy.

"Oh, well; it 's all the same Dutch," answered Josephine in her brusque way, holding up the cloak for inspection and admiration. Josephine's "loud" — no other word expresses it — Western taste was always questionable. Gypsy did not like the striking cuir-coloured cassock, with its heavy, dead-black finish of velvet; and while the rest admired, she said nothing.

"What are you going to have for a bonnet,

Jo?" asked Jacqueline, in a tone which plainly said that she should like to be asked what *she* was going to have. As Jo did not ask, however, Miss Delancey had to volunteer the information.

"Green velvet with quilted white satin let in. Quilted white is all the rage."

"Such showy things are not my taste," observed Maude Clare, who made it a point never to agree with Jacqueline under any circumstances, whatever the subject.

"Nor mine," said Gypsy.

"Of course, Gypsy always agrees with Miss —Smith," remarked Jacqueline, by way of retribution.

"High crowns, you know," said a New York girl, with the air of one quite willing to instruct Boston and all other little villages.

"As if we did n't know that! Of course nobody would be seen without a high crown."

Gypsy thought of those "little pieces," with which she was going to "poke it up." She felt just then that to be obliged to wear a low

crown would be an affliction greater than she could bear. I hardly think it was cowardly; it was only natural.

After a little chatter about balmorals and skating-boots, Alexander's gloves, thread lace barbes, the price of ermine, the exact length of dinner-dresses, and the relative merits of water-falls and coils, somebody said something about furs. Jo Courtis had a faint prospect of Hudson Bay Sables.

Everybody looked at Jo respectfully.

"Mother does n't like to see sables on school-girls," observed Maude Clare, "but she means to keep me in *very* nice mink till I graduate."

As Maude Clare was generally conceded, outside of Jacqueline Delancey's "set," to be the most *distingué*-looking girl in school, everybody looked at her with an expression of relief.

"I would n't be *seen* in anything short of mink," said Maude Clare, impressively; "everything cheaper than that is *so* common."

Gypsy's face flushed a little, where she sat

over in the corner behind her friend, — flushed for the instant, as if she had received some sudden degradation.

For her furs — the pretty muff and collar, her mother's Christmas present, which had matched and finished off her gray cassock so tastefully — her furs were only squirrel.

"*I'm* going to have Astrakhan," said Jacqueline (she had intended to have mink until this very minute); "that's the latest, and they say another year mink will be all out."

"That's fortunate, for I'm sure I shouldn't want yours just like mine," observed Maude Clare, with her peculiar smile.

Gypsy, over in her corner, was thinking. If squirrel were "so common," — and Maude Clare herself had said it, — what should she do? At least she could go without; her mother would say it was a risk, when she had been used to them so many winters; but her mother would not know.

Perhaps this, however natural, *was* a little cowardly. Was it not? However that might

be, Jacqueline hit the unspoken thought with an unexpected thrust, —

"I don't see but I shall have to go without any till holidays; I wouldn't trust anybody else to chose Astrakhan for me, and Mrs. M. won't let me go to Boston; she's been as cross as a bear since she caught me in the cars with Ben Sizer. I'm ashamed to go without, though; it looks so poverty-stricken."

"Which would *you* rather do, Maude, — go without or wear squirrel?" asked Gypsy in an undertone, fingering Maude Clare's tassel trimming — Maude always had rich trimmings — in an uneasy, absent way. But Jacqueline heard the question.

"I wouldn't be seen in squirrel *any*how," said she, with a little disdainful gesture of her pretty hands.

Jane Bruce had been sitting by the window, so quietly that no one had noticed her. Consequently every one started a little in surprise when she spoke suddenly and decidedly, —

"Well, I would, if I couldn't afford anything

nicer. Of course, I 'd rather have an expensive and stylish thing; so would anybody; but I should feel *degraded,* I'm sure I should, if I endangered my health all winter long rather than carry a squirrel muff!"

The girls had a liking, such as it was, for Jane Bruce; she had a way of doing errands without grumbling, and curing their neuralgia, and being sorry for their headaches, — a very quiet sort of way, to be sure, that nobody thought much about; but at any rate, they did not laugh at what she said.

"Well, well," said Jo Courtis, "Jane does n't care for the pomp and vanities, anyway, which makes a difference; do you, Jane?"

The question was thoughtless, — just like Jo. Gypsy glanced from her room-mate's mourning dress to her face, on which a slight sadness had settled. Her good sense told her that Jane was right. It told her, moreover, that Gypsy Breynton was a little ashamed of herself. So she spoke up in her honest way, —

"Anybody want my sentiments on squirrel

furs? Don't? What a pity! For you see, you'll have to see me in them all winter. It's either that, or worrying mother for fear I shall catch my death; so you'd better make up your minds to it. Jane, where's the algebra lesson?"

Jane was gone, as she was very apt to be; and nobody thought any more about her.

Not long after this, another matter came up, which troubled Gypsy more than anything of the kind had done before.

One day three or four of the girls appeared with three or four little gold stars, all just alike, and all affixed by a tiny gold chain to their pins. They were inscribed with some mysterious hieroglyphics, which no one could decipher without coming to an impertinent nearness.

"Why, what is it?"

"Did you ever?"

"Where *did* they get them?"

"What *do* they mean?"

"What on earth do they keep it such a dreadful secret for?"

So the whispers and the wonder buzzed

around for a week, but the wearers kept their lips shut, and nobody was any the wiser. At last one day it was reported that the gold stars were the badges of a Secret Society, the Chapter of the Golden Crescent, solemnly founded in the trunk closet on the fifteenth of November, and solemnly to be handed down to posterity as long as time and Mrs. McMunn's should endure.

"Why, how splen*did!*" said Gypsy. I doubt if Gypsy will ever outgrow her *penchant* for boy's plays.

Jo Courtis, Jacqueline Delancey, Mary Blunt, Lou Armstrong, and the Colchetts were the original members. There was a breathless suspense in official circles. Would the illustrious band enlarge itself? Who would be chosen next?

One day Maude Clare walked into Shakespeare, with the gold star hanging from her handsome lapis-lazuli pin. Maude Clare tried not to look important, and succeeded in looking it to perfection.

As soon as the recitation was over, Gypsy flew after her, and begged leave to examine the badge. Upon one side was a cabalistic design,

which might have been a toasting-fork, or a gravestone, or several other things.

"Or a teaspoon, perhaps?" suggested Gypsy.

"That's telling," said Maude Clare. Upon the other side were the letters E. S. handsomely engraved in German text.

"E. S.? E. S.? What on earth does E. S. stand for?"

"Guess."

"Well — Everlasting Sinners?"

"Guess again."

Gypsy could n't guess.

"Evergreen Sisters."

"Oh."

"That is to say, that's our public name. There is a private meaning, of course; we're on our oath not to tell that."

Gypsy fingered the pretty trinket with wistful eyes, but said nothing.

In the afternoon Maude Clare came into her room with a very mysterious air; Jane Bruce, seeing that she was not wanted, went out.

"You are elected, my dear," said Maude Clare, solemnly.

"Elected?"

"An Evergreen Sister. I am appointed a committee of one to notify you."

Gypsy rose demurely from her chair, and

jumped up and down three times, as hard as she could jump.

"You had better go down town and order your badge this afternoon, I think," said Maude Clare. Gypsy stopped jumping.

"How much does it cost?" she said, turning quickly round.

"Oh, only five dollars."

Only five dollars! It might as well have been fifty. Gypsy walked over to the window.

"Well?" said Maude Clare.

Gypsy made no reply; perhaps she could not just then; she was bitterly disappointed, and stood with flushed cheeks, and one little pearl of a tooth biting sharply at her lip, thinking about it. She had five dollars in her purse, but it was nearly all owing to her washwoman. They would send her checks from home as often as she asked for them, but she very well knew that her mother had set apart an allowance for the term, — all that could be spared, — which it would require close economy to come within. There was no twist or turn which

would leave room for a secret society at five dollars and taxes.

But if she wrote home and told them about it, and how much she wanted it, and how she should feel to have to tell the girls that she could not afford it? Undoubtedly the money would come, the very next week. Her mother would go without that lace collar, needed so much for her black silk; or she would put one row of trimming less on her merino; or she would give up her little plan to buy Miss Ingelow's book — and she had wanted it so long. Oh yes, the money would come, with "much love, my dear daughter, and I could n't bear to have you disappointed." Not a word would there be, though, of lace collar, or trimming, or Miss Ingelow. Gypsy knew her mother well enough to know about that.

I have known some girls who under such circumstances would have written the letter, and asked for the money — with many regrets, perhaps, and many thanks, and a profusion of

love and kisses, — but they would have asked for the money.

"Well?" repeated Maude Clare, impatiently. "What's the matter? Why don't you say?"

Gypsy turned round with a little jerk.

"Maude, I — can't."

"Well, I should like to know! Can't what?"

"I cannot be an Evergreen Sister. I cannot get the badge."

"Can't get the badge!" echoed Maude, in a puzzle.

"I cannot afford it, and that's the whole of it."

Gypsy spoke with heightened colour, but very decidedly.

"*Oh!*" said Maude Clare.

The heightened colour grew painfully bright; it rose to Gypsy's forehead, then faded.

"I suppose I must tell the girls," said Maude Clare. She spoke politely enough, but something, either in the words or the tone, struck

Gypsy unpleasantly. For the first time, though only for a moment, she felt not quite satisfied with her "beautiful, darling, *precious* Maude Clare."

"Tell them what you please," she said, and walked away.

That night, just as she was growing sleepy, Jane Bruce heard somebody whispering. She could not understand a word, but if she had, this is what she would have heard.

"I did n't, — no, I did n't. I did n't come near it. I only thought about it. I nearly bit my tongue off, too, I was so ashamed to think I *did* think about it. But then you know I did n't do it, and you see you don't know a thing about it, and you 're not going to, either. No, *ma'am!*"

It was Gypsy, talking to her mother.

She chanced to be writing to Tom that night; as she could not well keep a secret from Tom, and feeling quite safe, she told him the story of the badge. "Just to fill up, you know. Of course it is all settled, and there 's

no use in talking about it now; but I thought you would like to hear.

"I suppose I felt pretty badly standing up there at the window and telling Maude Clare I

could n't afford it; I was just such a little goose. But I might have worse things to feel badly about, might n't I, you blessed old boy?"

A few days after, a stout-looking letter came from New Haven. Gypsy opened it, wondering; and out dropped five dollars. Concerning which, Tom had this to say: —

My Evergreen Sister, — Run right down town and buy your badge. You need n't go to making up any of your horrible faces, for it 's all right. A part of it is father's New Year's present, a little ahead of time. The rest I could spare just as well as not, and a little better.

Who gave me all the cash she had, about the epoch of those Freshman scrapes? to say nothing of several other little things. If you don't remember,

Yours respectfully,

T. Breynton, does.

Happy Gypsy, after writing just sixteen pages of protestations and thanks to Tom, to which he made answer only and characteristically, " You hush up ! " — concluded that there

was nothing to be done but to order her badge and become an Evergreen Sister. Which she became, fifteen minutes after study-hours, on the very next Tuesday night.

Now, if you would like to know, I think on the whole I will tell you, that this account of the Society of the Evergreen Sisters is not "a story," but true, every word of it. How I happen to know, is another matter; and it would be very inquisitive in you to ask; especially as I certainly should not say. I will simply observe that I did not have to apply to Gypsy for the information.

It was time long ago for another chapter, but we really must stop for a glance at that eagerly expected Tuesday night. As the Evergreen Sisters long ago dissolved partnership — or, as Gypsy more classically expresses it, were "bounced up," — nobody breaks any oaths in telling the tale.

Tuesday night came as fast as other Tuesday nights, though it seemed leaden-footed to impatient Gypsy; and at a quarter of nine pre-

cisely, the Sisters assembled in Maude Clare's room. They were all there, — Maude, and Jacqueline, Jo Courtis, Lou, and Mary, and the Colchetts. "Poor Miss Holly" was there too.

"Had to let her in," whispered Maude Clare. "Her room, you know; would n't budge an inch; *would* insist on going to bed; could n't get it into her head that anything was up. What would you *do*, girls, if you 'd been made an owl?"

After some whispering among the others, the two new members of the Society — Susan Holly and Gypsy — were put into a corner by themselves, on Maude's large trunk. The lamps were turned down dimly; the curtains were drawn and pinned to the sills; the crack under the door, and the key-hole were stuffed with cotton wool.

"When Mrs. M. comes round to put out lights, she 'll think that the inhabitants have gone to bed," explained Josephine. "Jack and I do that little thing whenever there 's a novel,

or peanuts, or anything going on, and the woman never so much as knocks, 'does n't want to disturb our sleep,' bless her kind heart!"

Finally the register was shut, that the sound of their voices might not be carried to other rooms, and then Jo Courtis taking the chair — that is to say, seating herself on Miss Holly's study table, — opened the meeting by announcing that the new members would now be initiated into the mysteries of the Evergreen Sisters and the Chapter of the Golden Crescent.

Upon that, somebody blindfolded Gypsy, and told her that she would first be required to kiss the Holy Archives of the Society, which she, reverently proceeding to do, splash! went her head into a pail of very cold water. After that she was compelled to drink of the choice and ancient wine of the Society; and, if you know how water and sugar and salt, with a little Cayenne pepper and a touch of vinegar, taste, you will know how that tasted. After that

there was a spirited endeavour to toss her in a blanket; but the blanket, unfortunately, was an old one, and Gypsy was heavy, and what should it do but split the whole length through the middle, and land Gypsy with such a noise on the floor, that Miss Ayre came running upstairs, and severely inquired through the key-hole if anybody were hurt or crazy? After several other like exploits, of which the time faileth me to tell, Gypsy took her oath upon Webster's Unabridged, to keep the secrets of the Society inviolate, and was pronounced with due form and ceremony an Evergreen Sister.

Miss Holly had meantime been put through a similar process, and Josephine observed that they were ready to begin.

"Begin to what?" asked Gypsy. "I supposed we had come to the end."

Maude Clare replied by throwing open the closet door, and disclosing to view her light-stand, neatly draped with a clean towel, and covered with — I really do not know what

not. Cakes, and turnovers, and pies, and lemons, and candy, and nuts, and all the indigestible horrors that heart of school-girl could devise, to eat at ten o'clock at night.

"And what does E. S. stand for, my dear?" asked one of the Colchetts.

"Why, I suppose —"

"To be sure. Eating Society. Yes; come, girls, I'm dying for a chocolate cream."

"But I suppose you have to pay for it," said Gypsy, looking up from her cocoanut cakes presently.

"Oh, the tax is voluntary," said Maude Clare. "*I* give fifty cents a meeting; only once a fortnight, you know."

Again, as happened so often, Gypsy felt a little check upon her merriment. It would seem mean to contribute less than the rest. But then, she must make up her mind to it; and perhaps Miss Holly would keep her company.

The more poisonous a thing is to eat, and the more unearthly the hour of eating it, the

fuller the room is of kerosene gas from the low-burning lamps, the colder it is with the register shut off, the greater the risk of a teacher in the midst of them, and the deeper the mystery and excitement and hush and discomfort, the merrier girls will be. Very merry were the Evergreen Sisters; as for to-morrow's head-aches and dyspepsia and bad lessons and "blues" and crossness, if anybody thought of them, — why, sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof; as Josephine said, if that was n't a scriptural principle, she should like to know what was.

Mrs. McMunn came her rounds before the lemonade was gone; found the cotton in the keyhole, and passed on, leaving the girls all in a heap in the closet, stuffing their handkerchiefs into their mouths to keep from laughing.

It was about half-past ten when Gypsy crept into bed over Jane Bruce's feet, convinced that the Evergreen Sisters were a great success.

One thing she did not feel quite at ease about, — the little deception practised on Mrs.

McMunn. She said so the next day to Maude Clare. Maude laughed at her, and called her a particular child, but said that they should break up early after this. Mrs. McMunn had suspected that something was in the wind last night, and it was deemed advisable. The time between study-hours and ten o'clock was their own, and Gypsy felt no further scruples about being an Evergreen Sister.

It was enough to break down the constitution of a giant, to be sure; but "girls will be girls," and I am only telling what happened.

If, however, any poor victim stimulated to imitation should go and do likewise, I should repent having written this chapter, in dust and ashes, to the day of my death.

MAUDE CLARE had a box. The expressman had not rung the door-bell, before everybody in the house, from Phœbe Hand on the lower floor, up to Jane Bruce in the attic, knew that Maude Clare had a box.

Gypsy jumped and ran; Jane put away her books; Phœbe limped out into the hall; the whole second floor swarmed to the banisters, and peered over, — a medley of eyes, ribbons, waterfalls, curls, streamers, danglers, and whispers.

"If it *shouldn't* be anything to eat!" said Mary Blunt, who had been eating taffy all day,

and shagbarks all yesterday, and Ladies' drops all the day before, and something else every day since anybody could remember.

"It looks like a bonnet."

"Or a foot-tub, perhaps."

"Or books."

"The idea of sending Maude books?"

"Well, if it *should n't!*" sighed Mary.

"Oh, Mary Blunt!" But Jo sighed when Mary sighed, and Jacqueline sighed when Jo sighed, and in fact Mary cared no more about it than the rest, except that she had the courage to say so. And if you should observe, after reading this book, that Gypsy's schoolmates never did *anything* but eat, I should say that I really doubt if they ever did.

Maude was hammering away at her box, and denting her pretty fingers on the nails, and the cover was coming off.

"Apples?"

The row of eyes over the banisters brightened like a galaxy.

"It is n't, either! It 's only red strings to

Maude's winter bonnet!" and the row of eyes over the banisters looked like a little thundercloud.

"Oh, it is too — it *is* a plum cake and a bottle of pickles! Girls, we never saw such a duck of a bonnet as Maude's, did we? It's the sweetest love in school, is n't it?"

This came from Mary Blunt, and the rest flew after her down the stairs. Even Maude — and nobody liked to have her pretty things admired better than Maude Clare — was a little suspicious of the singular amount of interest that her bonnet excited. She went away upstairs with it rather haughtily, — that is to say, as haughtily as she conveniently could, under the circumstances, for the box was heavy, and the nails stuck into her chin.

"She is n't going to stand that!"

"Just like Maude; she 's a stingy thing!"

"Gypsy Breynton, you go up after her!"

Gypsy preferred to wait till she was sent for, and did so. Maude Clare called her up at last. Cake and pickles were nowhere to be seen;

Maude stood before the glass, with the winter bonnet — a rich velvet affair, which the light struck as it strikes a garment — tied over her onyx hair.

"Pretty, is n't it?"

"Very."

Gypsy stood admiring it, and the face inside

of it, but she was thinking about the pickles. What did the girls mean by calling Maude Clare "stingy"?

Presently Maude put away her bonnet, went to the closet, and brought out a little — a very little cucumber on a fork.

"I would give you more," she said, "but I'm going to save them for to-night. We will have the girls in after Biblical, and have a Heigh-o."

"Oh, splendid!" Gypsy brightened; so Maude Clare was n't stingy, and the girls ought to be ashamed of themselves. "And the cake too?"

"No, not the cake," said Maude Clare, looking a little displeased.

Gypsy's face fell once more. *Was* she — a little? or was n't she?

It was the custom at the Golden Crescent to consider boxes from home as common property. There was not a girl in school but her "beautiful, darling, precious Maude Clare," who would have locked up her plum cake in the drawer for private consumption.

"Is n't Maude going to have a Bang-up to-night? What! only the pickles? Whe—w!"

This was Jo Courtis' judgment.

"But I'm sure, Jo, it was very good in her to give us those," argued Gypsy, trying to comfort herself.

However nobody objected in the least to taking what they could get, and at nine o'clock Maude Clare's room was crowded. Miss Holly had built a particularly good fire, and Miss Holly had brought in chairs, and Miss Holly had dusted off the trunks, and Miss Holly had borrowed plates of the housekeeper, and Miss Holly had done all the work, generally, as she was very apt to do, while Maude Clare did the honours, and looked handsome.

But make the best they would of the repast, there was certainly a most uncomfortable consciousness of an aching void in every heart.

"But clear, bare, unadulterated pickles, you know!" said Josephine, pausing at the outset of a mouthful.

"They last so long and they do seem to taste so exactly the same all the way through!" remarked Mary Blunt, in a tone of conviction.

"Plum cake would n't be the thing at all," said Gypsy, in an anxious undertone; "it is n't Maude's fault."

"Go down and lay siege to Nancy," suggested somebody; and Jo went down. She was gone about ten minutes.

"It must be something extra superfine, you see," said Gypsy, "it has taken her so long to tease it out." Jo came in laughing.

"Here is a dainty dish to set before the king! — speaking of kings. Oh, my bleeding heart! you ought to have seen me squeezed up there behind the door on the back stairs, waiting for Madame la Holt to clear the way; nearly twisted my neck off, to say nothing of the spiders, and stepping on the cat and then choking her so she should n't howl over it, — and just look here."

Three cold fish-balls on a cracked saucer!

"That depraved female has either been read-

ing her Bible, or getting her quarter's wages," observed Mary Blunt, after a solemn pause.

"I'm going down to appeal to the humanity of Dolly. I gave Dolly two old crinolines and a linen collar last week; habit of mine to provide for emergencies; you see if I don't bring up bread and butter for you — hot bread; crisp pieces of crust; right out of the oven; with the butter melting."

Mary was gone another ten minutes, and came back with a tumbler of water.

"Take it somebody, do! I can't hold it for laughing. Here, Lou Armstrong, you must faint right away if you have the least regard for my conscience. Ran into Mrs. M. splash! Knocked off her waterfall — you ought to have seen it spin! — begged her pardon, but my feelings were agitated — my room-mate was sick, and wanted a glass of water. And — Oh dear! the woman was so compassionate, and offered to come up and see her! Would n't *anybody* have the goodness to be thirsty!"

The prospect began to look serious; the

"clear, bare, unadulterated pickles," impossible, through that hope deferred, which maketh the heart sick.

At last Maude Clare said that she had thought of a plan. Maude Clare was famous for thinking of plans, and very willing to look on and see somebody else carry them out.

"There is a plate of oyster crackers on the china closet shelf; I saw them this noon, when we had n't enough for the oysters, and Dolly said they were all gone." Maude was interrupted by a chorus of "Just the thing!"

"And Gypsy might go down — she 's so little — through the dining-room; there is n't a soul there; if anybody comes, she can whisk up the kitchen stairs, and if anybody comes from the kitchen, she can want my Testament that I dropped under the dining-room table at Biblical. You are so little, you know, Gypsy, and can get out of the way like a squirrel. I would go myself, but I 'm always so big; everybody sees *me*."

Gypsy's eyes had begun to twinkle at the

prospect. What good fun it would be! And when a thing promised good fun, Gypsy was not apt to think very far about it.

"Good! I'll do it. Here I bequeath you my pickle, girls, if I come to an untimely end. Keep it sacred to my memory, will you?" So, with her bubbling laugh, she bounded away from them, and downstairs.

The entry was nearly dark. The lamp at the foot of the stairs had gone out, and only the light from the front hall fell in faintly. The house was quite still.

Mademoiselle was correcting exercises in the back parlour. Jacqueline Delancey had fallen asleep over her practising, in the music-room. Phœbe Hand's room was just opposite the dining-room door, but Phœbe Hand's room was always still. Phœbe roomed with Miss Ayre, and that kept the girls away. Besides, as Maude Clare said, "a lame girl is n't nice company; she can't go about; and then it makes you nervous to see an ugly crutch round all the time, though, to be sure, it is n't her fault."

Gypsy stole into the dining-room, and looked around; crept to the closet door, and looked around; nobody was to be seen; nobody was to be heard. A little fleck of light fell through a chink in the kitchen door, and fell exactly upon the plate of crackers.

She stepped in on the softest tiptoe, leaving the door open a crack behind her, for the sake of the light. The plate was large, and very full. She could not move it without rattling off its contents, and she reflected that to climb the side stairs dropping crackers all the way, and that within an entry's width of Miss Ayer, would be an undertaking more rash than valorous. Accordingly she decided to put the crackers into her pocket. Maude had a plate upstairs, and school-girls are not particular.

The last cracker was just in, when she heard a noise. Somebody groping for the door-handle, and before she could stir, somebody groping, groping, across the dining-room; then a resounding blow, and a crash, and a groan, and a voice, —

"Oh, the Land's End! Oh, goodness gracious mercy on me! I've gone over that rocking-chair again! Nancy, Nancy! Here! You've let that entry lamp go out, and this is the third time I've broken my bones over Mrs. McMunn's rocking-chair, this blessed night. Come right along with a match now, as quick as you can!"

Gypsy, in the closet, choked and gasped, and stuffed her mouth with crackers to keep herself from laughing. Nancy came, muttering, with a lamp, and the housekeeper scolded till her ankle-bones felt better.

"You may leave the lamp," she said then. "I want to use it, to lock up for the night."

Oh dear! Oh dear! she was coming into the closet! Already her heavy steps sounded halfway across the room, limped by the register, thundered up to the door. Gypsy had but an instant to think. A barrel, nearly empty, stood under the shelves. She whisked it out, climbed into it, gave a little lurch partly back under the shelves, and crouched there, waiting. Mrs.

Holt came in with her lamp in her hand, and her spectacles on her nose.

Gypsy held her breath. Mrs. Holt dusted a plate, and looked into the sugar-bowl; shook down the salt-cellars; looked in the macaroni drawer, and counted the tumblers.

Gypsy, becoming suffocated, gave a little gasp.

Mrs. Holt stopped, and looked around.

"Another mouse, I declare! Nancy, bring the trap."

Nancy brought the trap, and the housekeeper, after setting it, put it down behind Gypsy's barrel.

"Nancy!" she called again. Nancy came back.

"Have you been meddling with this barrel, — pushing it out in this style, from under the shelf?"

Nancy had not been meddling with the barrel, and Nancy wished, though this was in an undertone, that folks would mind their business, and let her go to bed in peace.

Mrs. Holt took hold of the barrel with her stout arms, and rolled it up with a jerk into the corner, under the shelves.

"I would n't have thought of its being so heavy," she remarked half aloud, as she paused for breath. "There must be more sugar left than I supposed."

Upon that, she went out, shut the door, locked it, put the key in her pocket, and limped away.

"And never thought a thing about the crackers!" gasped Gypsy, through her stifled laughter. "Locked me in, with them in my pocket. Oh, I never did! How the girls will laugh! Oh dear, oh dear! Now it's only to jerk out my barrel from under this old shelf, and then in through the dumb waiter into the kitchen and up the back stairs. Nancy will be abed, or if she is n't, why, I 'll give her an old necktie to-morrow, and that will be the end of *her*. Now, Mrs. Holt, we 'll see?"

See, she did, in a very unexpected manner. For the sugar barrel absolutely refused to

move. She jerked it and turned it; she leaned over on this side, she leaned over on the other; she worked herself round in it; she jumped up and down in it — that is to say, she rose and fell a very little way laboriously, bumping her head each time against the shelf. But all to no purpose. The barrel remained *in statu quo*.

"You — won't — will you?" said Gypsy, apostrophising it slowly. "Now, my dear, if I *were* a barrel, I would n't; I really would n't. I don't think it's sweet-tempered in you; and who has facilities for cultivating sweet temper, if you have n't? Now, if Jo Courtis gets over this in a term! I don't see as there is anything to do but to call the daughters of Erin.

"Nancy! Dolly! Nancy!" Somebody was shuffling about the kitchen, but nobody answered.

"*Nancy!*"

The shuffling stopped, apparently in some alarm.

"Nancy! Nancy Donnavan! Let me out!"

"Arrah! The howly mither! What's that now?"

"It's I locked up here in a barrel, and I can't get out!" called Gypsy. "You crawl in the dumb waiter, and pull me out, you know. Nan-*cy*, unfasten the dumb waiter, quick!"

The only answer was a quick stampede, as of some one hiding behind the pantry door, and a terrified, panting breath broken up into short cries of "*Oh*, Lor' have mercy!" "An' it's kilt intirely I am with the fear!" And "To think of their selthin' afther a poor creether this time o' night — the very time this day year, me third cousin died of the liver complaint, an' me sole an' alon' in the kitchen! *Oh*, good gracious!"

Gypsy, finding that any ordinary noise which she could make rather complicated than bettered her prospects of release, began forthwith to make a most extraordinary one. She rattled the barrel, she pounded the barrel; she bumped the shelf; she slapped the shelf;

she shouted after Nancy till her breath gave out.

Nancy gave one howl, —

"Och! it's the ghost of him, as true as I'm a livin' sinner! The Virgin an' the blessed Saints have mercy on us," threw her apron over her head, and tore upstairs as if her last hour had come.

It was absolutely necessary to laugh now, no matter what the consequences.

"Dear me!" said Miss Ayre, coming to her door in her night-dress, and putting the edge of her sharp chin out into the cool entry air, "what a racket! Do you know what mischief the girls are up to to-night, Phœbe? On the whole, though, I think it must be Nancy putting away her tubs."

She went back and shut the door, and after that the house was still. Very still; in fact, it seemed to Gypsy as if she had never known it so still. Her very breaths sounded like groans, and a crack of the barrel like a thunderclap. What was to be done? The idea of staying

locked up all night in a china-closet — in a barrel — under a shelf! Jerk herself free she could not, and tip herself over she dared not. Such a noise in that deathly stillness would wake every echo and every inmate of the house. The chance of crawling through into the kitchen and escaping upstairs before discovery was too slight to be worth the risk. Besides, the dumb waiter might be fastened upon the other side.

"C-h-a-r-ming little fix! Now I should like to know! Let me see; if I tip over, — no, I won't tip over. Mrs. M. would be frantic. If I stay where I am and go to sleep, why, by-and-by it will be morning, and Nancy will be up building the furnace fire early, and if she does n't expect her third cousin to walk round by daylight, she will let me out; and what 's more, she will hold her tongue about it. But to sleep in a sugar-barrel! Let 's taste; yes, to be sure. I wonder how many pounds there are, or quarts — don't they sell sugar by the quart? I wonder if I shall have to pay for it.

You blessed little woman at home, what *would* you think of this? I wonder what the girls did — with — my — pick-le — and — "

By the time that she had thought as far as this, she was asleep. So, by that time, was every one else. Maude Clare and the rest, finding that she and the crackers did not make their appearance, supposed that she had been playing a trick upon them, and was gone to bed. Jane Bruce, sound asleep half an hour ago, did not suppose anything about her.

In the middle of the night there was an unearthly noise in the china-closet. Gypsy, dreaming that there was a mouse down her neck, had tipped over her barrel.

Miss Ayre came to her door and screamed "Robbers!" Mrs. Holt appeared in an indescribable wrapper, groped into the dining-room, tripped over the inevitable rocking-chair, and fiercely demanded, "Who's there? Mr. Holt, bring along that gun!" This worthy man, twenty years since departed to a world where thieves do not break through and steal,

was invariably — at least so ran the tradition — made formidable use of against that persistent burglar by whom the dreams of his valiant relict were almost nightly disturbed. "Mr. Holt's gun" had passed into a proverb at the Golden Crescent, but never with her own ears had Gypsy actually heard it appealed to before. It took her so long to smother her laughter and gain her breath, that Mrs. Holt had gone back to bed, and the house was still again, and she had not called for help.

"However, now I'm tipped over," she thought, "I don't see what is to prevent my trying the dumb waiter and getting upstairs in my stocking-feet — Hilloa!"

The dumb waiter was fastened upon the other side.

There being nothing to do but to go to sleep again, Gypsy lay down with her head in the barrel, and went to sleep; and that was the last she knew till it was morning, and somebody was trying the key in the door.

Mrs. Holt had waked at six o'clock and

thought of those crackers, and, forthwith jumping into her dressing-gown and spectacles, down she had come, frowning and suspicious, to see if they were safe.

She flung open the door and glared in. There lay Gypsy, with her head in the sugar-barrel.

"*Miss* BREYNTON!" said Mrs. Holt, in a voice of thunder.

"Ma'am?" said Gypsy, sleepily.

"Is this *you?*"

"I — suppose so," said Gypsy, faintly. "I don't — know — exactly. I went to sleep, and then —"

Mrs. Holt solemnly took off her spectacles, solemnly rubbed them, solemnly put them on again, solemnly pinched Gypsy to see if she were flesh and blood, locked the door upon her, and went straight to Mrs. McMunn.

Gypsy waited and trembled. Mrs. McMunn came with awful haste, threw open the door, and stood speechless. In the agitation consequent upon Mrs. Holt's announcement, the

good lady had succeeded in fastening her waterfall precisely in a line with her right ear, and there it hung — gracefully swaying, tremulous yet, from her hurried descent of the stairs.

Gypsy became so much interested in watching it that she very nearly forgot what Mrs. McMunn had come for. The Principal, however, quickly restored her memory.

"Miss Gypsy Breynton!"

"Yes, 'm, I know it," said Gypsy, meekly.

"I should like to know," proceeded Mrs. McMunn, with a severe shake of her waterfall, — "I should like to know, if you will be so good as to tell me, how you came here, and what you have been doing."

Just then something rattled out of Gypsy's pocket, and spun away over the bare floor.

"It's my crackers!" screamed the housekeeper, looking in over Mrs. McMunn's shoulders. "It's those crackers, that I lay awake half the night over, I was so anxious about them. Oh, the Land's End! to think of it!"

"Oh, I forgot," said Gypsy. "Yes, the girls wanted the crackers, Mrs. McMunn, and I never thought, and so I came down and Mrs. Holt locked me in, and then you see I thought there was a mouse in my neck and the barrel tipped me over, and I'm very sorry, Mrs. McMunn, but you can't think how funny it was, I don't think you can possibly think how funny it was, unless you were to see me, now really."

The teacher's mouth twitched a little.

"Miss Breynton, we have had enough of this levity, I think we have had enough of this levity."

"Yes, 'm," replied Gypsy mildly, regarding her with an attentive air.

"You 're not attending to what I say!" said her teacher, rather sharply. "What are you looking at?"

"Oh, I do beg your pardon!" Gypsy blushed all over. "I was only thinking — I was only looking —"

"At what?" insisted the Principal.

"At your — your waterfall, you know."

It was now Mrs. McMunn's turn to blush. She felt round her head with both hands, after the unfortunate waterfall, till she found it; when, by way of improving the matter, she took it off and put it in her pocket. Gypsy *felt* that the scene beggared description, but look, she dared not.

"Altogether too much levity," repeated the Principal, as severely as she knew how. "And I really never would have supposed,

Miss Breynton, that you could be capable of—"

"Mrs. McMunn," interrupted Gypsy, seriously. "If *you* had spent the night in a sugar-barrel, squeezed up in a funny little heap—you 've no idea what a funny little heap it would make of you—under an old shelf, and bumped your head every time you stirred, and found the dumb waiter locked on top of it, and all, you would n't want to be scolded *very* badly, Mrs. McMunn."

"In the sugar-barrel! Oh, Miss Breynton, Miss Breynton!"

Mrs. McMunn gave up all efforts at composure, collapsed upon the nearest firkin, and laughed till she cried. She seemed to recollect, at last, that Gypsy remained there to be scolded, and grew suddenly severe again.

"I really never should have thought you capable, Miss Gypsy, of stealing anybody's crackers, much less—"

"Stealing!"

"Certainly, my dear. What was it if it was n't stealing?"

"Why, so it was," said horrified Gypsy, after some consideration. "Why, I never thought! Why, how funny!"

"Funny!" said poor Mrs. McMunn, in imminent danger of subsiding upon the firkin again. "Funny, Miss Breynton? Why, really, I—"

"What *will* that blessed woman say?" observed Gypsy in an undertone, seriously enough. "Stealing! And I must tell her all about it to-night. And to think it never crossed my mind now!"

"What blessed woman, my dear?" asked Mrs. McMunn, looking very much flattered.

"Only my mother," said Gypsy, looking up. "Mrs. McMunn, I believe I've been a horrid little wretch, and I ask your pardon, you know, and I'll pay for the sugar, but I'm sure I did not mean to be a horrid little wretch, and if you please, I'll never get into any of your sugar-barrels again. I don't suppose I ever shall hear the last of this, though."

She never did.

DEAR GYPSY, — Why don't Mrs. Makmunn let you come home? I don't like her. If I should just see her, I'd knock her down, sir, and then I'd stamp on her, and then I'd frow sum orful cold watter on her. My Cat had 2 fits; she skratched Mrs. Surly too. I swallerd a apple-seed yesterday, Why won't it gro upp into a napple-tree inside of me. I would n't like that. Tommy Rowe's dorg she laid him 4 little dorgs last week. They have n't got any feathers. Besides, they 're blind, and Besides, they can't see anything. Father says if I ete so much pop corn, I shan't live long enuff to gro up and keep my kandy-shop. I am

bigger 'n I was when you were hear. I am a big Boy and go two Sundy-School now. I know about Elijah. I would like to be as good Mann as Elijah was. Of kourse a Prophett is a great deal gooder than a kandy-man. Now you just write me a leter as good as this.

MR. WINNIE BREYNTON.

Yorkbury, Vt.

Gypsy laid down the letter laughing, and took up her mother's. She had already read that through twice, but one part of it much surprised and somewhat puzzled her. So, thinking it over, she read it again. It ran thus:

Be on your guard a little, Gypsy. There will be, figuratively speaking, a good many plates of crackers at the Golden Crescent, which will draw you into locked closets, unless you are on the watch against being *led*. Because the girls are older than you, they have a certain advantage of influence. Struggle against it. Take your own time to think, and act as you think, if what you think is right.

Your "beautiful, darling, precious Maude Clare," for instance; she may be a very nice girl, but remember that you do not yet know very much about her. If, some day or other, you should find out that she is not exactly

what she seems to you to be — in fact, that she is something very different from what she seems to you to be, it would be only what has happened in girls' lives ever since there have been any girls. However, any such discoveries that are to be made, you must make for yourself. I only throw out now and then a bit of a hint, by way of signal-light.

By the way, speaking of Maude Clare, reminds me: Be sure that *you* are a perfect lady, no matter what anybody else may ever prove to be.

As ever, lovingly,

MOTHER.

When Gypsy had read this for the third time, she threw her Virgil and Lexicon with such a bang upon the floor that quiet Jane jumped half-way across the room.

"Why, Gypsy! What on earth is the matter?"

"Nothing," said Gypsy, with flushed cheek, "only I have something to say to mother; that's all."

She sat straight down and wrote: —

"Why, mother! Why, I never! Why, how *could* you? You just went and hinted that Maude Clare is n't a perfect lady — you know you did! Why, she 's so par*tic*ular, and so proud, you've no idea; and last summer one day a gentleman kissed her and she fired up and told him he did n't dare to do that again, and he did it again, and by-and-by she got up and walked right out of the room. She *never* lets people take liberties with her, and she 's so polite, too, and I think you 're *very much* mistaken, and I don't see what made you say such a thing, for you see you don't know hardly anything about her; only what I 've told you; and I don't see how I can help knowing best, mother, I 'm sure."

Had Gypsy seen the smile with which her mother read this, she would have been more perplexed than ever.

One afternoon when study-hours were over, Maude Clare came upstairs to ask Gypsy to go to walk with her.

"Why — you see," said Gypsy, hesitating, with a glance at the window, where her room-mate was finishing her French exercise, "I promised Jane I'd go with her. I don't go with her very often, you know. It's too bad, though; I'd a great deal rather go with you."

This was in a whisper, but whispers are always more easily audible than people suppose; Jane may have heard it, for she turned over the leaves of her Fasquelle quickly, with a sudden flush upon her cheek.

"Oh, Jane does n't care; do you, Jane?" said Maude, aloud.

"Care about what?"

"Let Gypsy go to walk with me, — there 's a good girl. I have a particular reason for wanting her to-day."

"A particular reason?" questioned Gypsy, curious and undecided.

"Oh, don't mind me," spoke up Jane, hurriedly. "I don't care — that is, I mean I would rather have you do as you feel about it.

I can go with Phœbe Hand just as well, you know."

"It's a *very* particular reason," urged Maude.

Gypsy, still looking undecided, began to put on her things, saying something to Jane meanwhile about being sorry, and hating to break an engagement, and — she did n't know — but —

Jane put an end to the matter by running down to find Phœbe; and Gypsy and Maude Clare went slowly down after her, and out of the house. Maude was chattering about the fit of her gloves. Gypsy did not listen.

"It *is* good," she interrupted suddenly.

"What — the colour?"

"No; I was n't thinking about gloves. I mean Jane Bruce."

"Well, what about Jane Bruce?"

Maude spoke a little sharply, and pulled up her gloves with a jerk. As long as Miss Maude Clare was the subject of remark, this young lady evinced unusual conversational abilities. Strike off upon another topic, and one

could but notice — every one, that is, but Gypsy — how suddenly her interest flagged, and her brilliancy grew dim.

"Why, I was thinking how good it is in her to go so much with that Phœbe Hand," pursued Gypsy, too busy with the thought to observe how Maude had received it. "She walks with her, and she rides with her, and she goes in to see her; I don't see how she can, I'm sure, with Miss Ayre looking round."

"Yes," said uninterested Maude. "Yes, I suppose so. Look at Jack Delancey showing off those everlasting hands of hers across the road there! She wears kid gloves all the time just because they make them look smaller. I would n't be seen in kids every day, such freezing weather as this, in such a little country place as Snapberry."

"I think your hands look prettier in Cashmere than they do in kid," observed Gypsy. "Such little soft brown stuff curves and fits so easily; besides, it makes the fingers look shorter."

"Yes," said Maude Clare; "I don't know but it does. It is n't everybody that can bear Cashmere without making one's hands look like a cook's. I know Jack could n't, because hers are so fat. I declare! See her flirting her handkerchief at those boys. How she does act! See, she has on her best bonnet too, and I never saw anybody sail about the streets as she does, since she had that trailing green poplin. I 'd bet you a cookie, as Jo Courtis says, that Jack Delancey considers herself Number 1 in this school, — in fact, I have it on very good authority, that she said so herself, to Mary Blunt."

"Number 1!" repeated Gypsy, looking puzzled. "Why, what do you mean by Number 1?"

"Why I mean just Number 1! I can't put it any plainer; if you don't know what that is."

"Why, I 'm sure she does n't profess to be the best scholar," said Gypsy, considering, "nor the best behaved; and she is n't a bit of a favourite among the girls, and —"

"You little simpleton!" interrupted Maude

Clare, with her patronising laugh. "Of course I don't mean anything like *that*. If you must have a translation, Number 1 means the most stylish, the most distingué, — the — I suppose — having the most of an air to your things, and plenty of money, you know, and — why, all that."

"Oh!" said Gypsy. She looked down the street as she spoke, where Jacqueline's striking green poplin dragged its slow length along, and Jacqueline's feathers and ribbons were blowing about in the wind. Then turning around, her eye fell on Phœbe, limping down the hill, and leaning heavily on Jane Bruce's arm.

"You have n't shown yourself much interested in what I said before we came out," said Maude Clare, in an aggrieved tone, after a silence had fallen between the two.

Gypsy started from her musing, and begged pardon.

"Your particular reason for wanting me to-day? Oh yes, I am interested; I want to know. Of course I want to know. What was it?"

"I have something to show you, *ma chère*, and that's why —"

"Something to —"

"That is to say, somebody."

"Maude Clare, what is the matter? What's up? What are you blushing about?"

Maude Clare indignantly denied that she was blushing, and somewhat unintelligibly requested Gypsy not to say anything, but to wait and see. Gypsy, not having anything to say, said nothing, but waited and saw.

Presently Maude Clare turned from the main street into a quiet by-road, bounded with stone walls and apple-trees, and comparatively secure from a crowd of passers.

"Why, what are you turning up Love Lane for?" asked Gypsy. "It is n't half so good walking; the ground is all frozen up in little jolts, Maude."

"You'll see," said Maude, mysteriously. At the same time she was looking very intently up the road.

"There!" she said at last, and pulled her

spotted lace veil — it was very becoming — down suddenly over her face.

"There what?"

"There he is."

Gypsy observed then, far up the road, the figure of a young man or boy approaching them. He was not very tall, but of rather a graceful form, and even at that distance she could see that he was fresh from the hands of a city tailor.

"Who is he, Maude?"

"Hush-sh! It's Ben Sizer."

Gypsy hushed; thinking that it was some old acquaintance of whom Maude Clare had never chanced to speak to her. She was much surprised to see that, as the young fellow neared them, Maude did not bow to him. She glanced up with a smile — one of those brilliant smiles, such as had attracted Gypsy in the car on the evening that they came to the Golden Crescent — and then looked demurely on the ground, her eyelashes on her cheeks, and her hands in her sacque-pockets.

The stranger had scarcely passed her, however, when he stopped, and, raising his hat, said something in an undertone that Gypsy did not hear; at the same time handing her his card. If Gypsy had been surprised before, she was struck dumb when Maude Clare, instead of repelling the impertinence in a dignified way, took the card with a blush and a smile, drew her own from her pocket, handed it to him, and with a familiar "Good-afternoon" walked slowly on.

Gypsy waited till they were out of hearing, then expressed her opinion in this fashion: —

"Why, Maude — Clare — Smith!"

"Well, what's the matter? You need n't tuck on my last name if you are mystified. Anybody would think you had been taking lessons of Jack Delancey."

"I should like to know!"

"Know what?"

"Did n't you — why, have n't you ever seen that boy before to-day?"

Maude laughed noisily.

"Occasionally — yes, dear; about a dozen times, perhaps."

"Why, where?"

"Oh, church, and lectures, and down town, and so on. You've seen him too, only you hadn't the sense to remember it. Did you ever see such eyes? And such a love of a moustache!"

"Why, then, you — must be acquainted with him, I suppose?"

"Depends upon what you call acquaintance. I never spoke to him till to-day. It was real bright in him to think of introducing himself that way, wasn't it? I never should have got an introduction any other way. Nobody knows him in school but Jack Delancey, and she'd sooner cut her head off than have him fall into my hands. It will be a joke to hear what My Lady has to say to this. It was so cute."

"Cute! Why, I thought he was the most impudent fellow I ever saw. But you won't treat him like anybody else, of course, and bow to him?"

"My dear little Gypsy, pray, why should n't I! Of course I would n't without *any* introduction, like Jack; but I 'm sure he was very thoughtful and gentlemanly about it, and I don't see any reason for cutting him. I don't care anything about it though, anyway, and very likely I shall if I feel like it."

"Oh," said Gypsy, looking a little relieved; "well, I hope you won't have anything more to do with him, anyway; it is n't a bit like you." But after this she was silent for some time.

"Have you ever met him before in Love Lane?" she questioned presently.

"Why, let me see; once or twice, perhaps," said Maude Clare, evasively.

"But you know something about him, I suppose, — who he is, and all."

"Why, stupid! he is Mr. Ben Sizer."

"But, I mean, anything more, you know."

"Well, he is a student at Harvard College, I believe; so Jack says."

"Harvard! But it's term time at Harvard; how happens he to be here?"

"Oh, I don't know, nor care," said Maude, carelessly. "Hush! I declare! Look round!"

Gypsy looked, and saw, to her surprise, that Mr. Benjamin Sizer was following them at a rapid pace.

"The horrid, impudent old thing! Come, Maude, let's hurry home."

Just then, the most surprising series of accidents happened to Miss Maude Clare. She dropped her glove, and she was sure that she had lost her purse, and her boot-lacing came untied, and her veil blew off, and, take it altogether, she was delayed so long upon the sidewalk that Mr. Sizer had picked up the veil, had joined them to return it, had fallen into step to walk beside them, and had been formally introduced to Gypsy, before Gypsy had fairly recovered from her amazement and seen through the performance.

At this point, however, "I'm going to walk

on!" she said, with bright cheeks and indignant eyes.

Maude Clare exclaimed: "Oh, don't, Gypsy! Stay with us, — it's only a little way."

"I should be really very sorry to be deprived of the pleasure of your company," urged the collegian, with a very low bow.

"Can't help it if you are!" said Gypsy, bluntly. "It's against the rules, and I'm going home."

And home she went as fast as her feet could carry her.

"Spunky! I declare!" she heard Mr. Sizer observe as she crossed the street.

He strolled on slowly with Maude Clare, — very slowly; there were no teachers upon the street; the twilight was falling. The twilight had quite fallen when Maude Clare came in. Gypsy was sitting alone in the dark, with her cheek leaning upon her hand, and her hat in her lap; she had not taken off the rest of her things, but seemed to have dropped

into the first chair that she came to, deep in thought.

"Gypsy — this you?"

"Yes."

"What are you sitting here in this azure fashion for?"

Maude Clare came up and pinched her cheek, as she was used to, to "find the dimple," and kissed her several times. Gypsy sat silent, and did not return the caress.

"Gypsy, how cross you are! What ails you?"

But Gypsy sat silent still. If it had not been dark, Maude Clare might have seen that her pretty black eyelashes were wet. She was thinking of what her mother had said. She was thinking of Mr. Benjamin Sizer. All her sense of delicacy and dignity had been jarred. Could a *lady* have done what Maude had done that afternoon? She must answer her own question honestly, and it hurt her — it did hurt a little — to decide it against her "precious Maude Clare."

But Maude stood there, looking very handsome and grieved and injured, and she caressed the dimple back into its place with her pretty soft fingers, and so they went down to tea together, and Gypsy said nothing about it.

GOLDEN CRESCENT, Dec. 20.

MY ANGEL OF A MOTHER, — Holidays, holidays, holidays! The darling McMunn has given us a week, and I'll never laugh at her waterfall again, — if I can help it. I shall just catch that blessed Thomas, and I shall sleep again in my own dear room, and I shall climb into your own dear arms, and besides, I shall have some rice griddle-cakes, and I really don't know whether I am standing on my head or my feet.

Your bewildered

GYPSY.

P. S. Maude Clare means to write to me every day. A week is *so* long to be separated.

The little letter hurries on its way, and the days are hurrying with it. There is much surprise and expecting and making ready, in the happy Green Mountain home. There is impatient waiting and there are longing eyes, and there is a wild sense of freedom in the very grammars and lexicons at the Golden Crescent. Gypsy falters through the last Virgil lesson, corrects the last French exercise, plunges poor Chaplain Goss into despair over her last equation, by announcing that x equals one goose and two-thirds of a goose, rushes through the last Shakespeare reading and the last composition, loses the last lead-pencil, and tips over the last ink-bottle; bestows the last crinoline on Dolly, takes the last look at Mrs. McMunn's waterfall, the last kiss from Maude Clare's red lips, and before she knows exactly what is happening, has been steamed into Yorkbury, and rumbled up in the old coach to the old home-door, with the old dear faces clustered on the steps.

Ah, such a pleasant week; such a short,

dear week! She grudges every moment spent in night and sleep, and is sure that the days are not so long by several hours as they were when last she was at home. Her mother's sweet, bright face is there, to be watched and kissed and patted and talked to, hours without end. Her father's mind must be set at rest as to the exact amount of her expenses, and the ventilation of her room at the Golden Crescent. Winnie's cat, feeling called upon to contribute to the entertainment, has three fits regularly every day; which furnish Winnie with a most fruitful and interesting subject of conversation, in season and out of season. Patty, with beaming face, concocts the most delicious of rice-cakes and Charlotte Russe, to honour the vacation, and in addition gives astonishing and practical evidence of her favour, by volunteering to make Miss Gypsy's bed for her while she is at home, which, be it recorded, Patty has never thought herself capable of before. But, best of all, is the short, sweet sight of Tom. "So nice, you know, that his vacation should

just come right with mine," Gypsy says, "and did you ever see such a handsome fellow in all your life?" "Besides," she writes to Maude Clare, "he studies like a house on fire, and behaves like a deacon, and I have a good reason for being glad of that. Perhaps," — she is going to add, — "perhaps I will tell you about it sometime;" but hesitates, and leaves the sentence unfinished. Maude Clare is not exactly the one to hear *that* story. Some quick tears spring just then into her eyes; for she has a thought of another than Maude Clare, whom she used to love with a very different love from that which she gives to this strong, bright, handsome girl, — another, who knew all about "that story." As for the meaning of these two memories, will it not be found recorded in the chronicles of "Gypsy's Sowing and Reaping"? or according to Winnie (who has, by chance, heard a distant report of that book), "Gypsy's *Sewing and Ripping*."

Right into the happy week come Christmas frolics and sweet New Year hopes and wishes,

and last, but not least, a present or two. Gypsy, undoing a curious, oblong bundle that she finds in her chair at the breakfast-table, fairly screams, —

"Oh, you *sweetest* of women! A Chinchilla muff! and a gray silk scarf to match! And how you ever happened to guess what Jack said, and Maude, and how I did try not to mind its being squirrel, but kept wondering if they were laughing at me, you know!"

"I wish I could have bought a complete set, dear; but if you can get along with the scarf for the present —"

"Get along!" Gypsy fairly hushes up the words with her kisses and delight, and must needs sit straight down and write Jane Bruce all about it. Somehow it does not come natural to tell the little tale to Maude. Jane always is interested to hear such things; and then Jane was so brave about the squirrel, — on the whole, the thought of her slips most naturally into the matter.

The week has lengthened to ten short days, and after the merry-making there comes a little lull. Gypsy is going. Frolics and sleigh-rides and Charlotte Russe and Winnie's kitty and Tom's college stories are becoming part of a

far-away past. Lexicon and copy-books and compositions and Miss Ayre are drearily at hand.

Her mother has not had a chance for a quiet talk with Gypsy; but one night just before she goes, the chance comes, and the talk.

"Now I want to hear all about it, Gypsy."

So Gypsy, climbing into her lap, begins with her appearance at Snapberry on the dripping station-platform, and comes down through the term, and everything that she has thought, said, or done, she remembers and repeats to the best of her ability. Her mother, at the close, looks a little grave.

"But the lessons, Gypsy?"

"Lessons — Oh, yes, I forgot. Yes, we had some lessons. I did n't have *very* bad ones, because I was ashamed to, but I don't suppose I studied much, though."

To which her mother has a few things to say.

One day, soon after she was back at the Golden Crescent, Maude Clare found Gypsy studying directly after tea.

"Why, Gypsy Breynton, I've been hunting the house over for you! Why, this isn't study-hours! Come, the girls are having the Lancers down in the music-room, and I want you."

Gypsy laid down her Roman History.

"Maude Clare, you're my evil angel. Now, what do you suppose my mother told me, the last night I was at home?"

"Oh, I don't know; here, give us your book! Now! it's behind the bed, and you'll have to come."

"She told me," pursued Gypsy, with great seriousness, — "she told me that I came to school to — think of it, Maude! — to study."

"She did!"

"Yes, and she actually asked me how much I supposed I had learned. Why, I laughed right out. But what's more, I told her I would learn something this term. Accordingly, I eat chocolate taffy all study-hour this afternoon."

"Oh, well, it's all the same; come, we can't get along without you. Gypsy Breynton, if you don't stir pretty quickly, I'll pull your

hair down!" Which Maude proceeded to do, and Gypsy sat, a perplexed-looking little statue, wrapped about with a flood of bright black waves.

"I might make it up — it's only five pages more — after Biblical."

"But it's Society night."

"So it is — well, I will make time in the morning, then. I can't stand that music much longer."

So, still wrapped in her pretty hair, she bounded down to the music-room, three stairs at a time.

"I don't think you will study in the morning," said Maude Clare, trying to keep up with her, "when you see a novel I brought from home on purpose for you to read. It's 'The Shadow of a Life-time,' — most elegant story, and so *weird*, you've no idea."

To her justice, be it recorded that Gypsy did study in the morning till the history lesson was learned. When afternoon came, however, and she was sleepy, and the room was hot, and

"The Shadow of a Life-time" lay, in tempting brown binding and beautiful print, open upon the table, she thought that she would just look it over, see the heroine's name, and how it ended, before commencing on those dreary conjugations.

"'*Over the little one's future all unknown to thee, innocent one, a Shadow hung;*' why, Jane, this looks interesting. Oh, what's this picture? '*Lorina found by her Lovers.*' Dear me! what a lot of 'em she had! Oh, here's a description of a ball-dress. I think descriptions of ball-dresses are splendid. There, I've lost the place. Oh, no!

"'*Her head was unadorned, save by a single diamond, in a wreath of artificial roses.*' Let me see" — and that was the end of the conjugations.

"Jane dear," observed Gypsy, languidly, looking up from the amiable Lorina when study-hours were half over, "I don't see what you are always studying for."

Silent study-hours were the rule, and Jane made no reply.

"Oh, I forgot," said Gypsy; "well, I won't talk. I'm going to study when I get through this chapter."

"This chapter" lasted till the bell rang to go to walk. Gypsy, flushed and excited, threw the book angrily down, but made no remarks.

"Why don't you come to bed?" asked Jane that night, after the lamp was out. Gypsy was sitting by the window in her night-dress. She sat there some time; and there the following conversation took place.

"I was a little villain, that's what I was! I won't do it again. But I think it's dreadfully poky work studying."

"What did you come to the Golden Crescent for, dear?"

"Oh, well I know it; but I can't be an 'exemplary scholar' now, like Jane there, mother. Why, just think, she not only learns her lessons perfectly; but she — actually — *reads somebody else's Roman History in connection* with our little black one, TO IMPROVE HER MIND!"

"When Jane is out of school, she will know

something to pay for it. And some day, you will be sorry that you have not been more like her, Gypsy."

"My dear, respected mother, I beg your pardon, but I don't believe it! I won't be a dunce, but I can't be a model."

After which, she went to bed. To do Gypsy justice, the management at the Golden Crescent was not such as was calculated to help a rollicking, frolicking, bright girl — who could skim over a lesson in ten minutes, make a fair recitation, and forget it within an hour — in the formation of solid habits of study. Mrs. McMunn was just what she looked to be, — an awkward, good-natured, easy-going, and by no means scholarly woman. In fact, she owed her position to the reputation of a distinguished brother, rather than to any attainments or suitabilities for the work of a teacher which anybody had ever been so fortunate as to discover in her. Miss Ayre was a severe disciplinarian, and Chaplain Goss a thorough mathematical instructor; but under-teachers cannot guide

the helm. Mrs. McMunn was careless about enforcing their rules, and made herself no system of marks, rewards, or punishments, to serve as incitement to the ambitious, or threat to the lazy; so it was small wonder that even Gypsy's most violent efforts to become that "exemplary scholar" flagged after a day or two, and subsided into taffy and novels.

But Jane's did not. Nor Lou Armstrong's. Nor the efforts of one or two others. Had Gypsy shown a little of the application of any one of them, she might have outstripped them all. She was simply spending her school-days as many another thoughtless, talented girl is spending them, the world over; neither better nor worse. "I won't be a dunce, but I can't be a model," just expressed it.

But Gypsy was not, as she used to say forlornly sometimes to her mother, "just a jumble of naughtiness, without *any* goodness sprinkled in." Taking, for instance, a thing that happened soon after the beginning of the

term; it was a very little thing, but not too small to be without its uses.

It was one Sunday noon, just after church; several of the girls had come up into Gypsy's room; one or two with a headache or "the blues," hunting for Jane; the rest Gypsy's friends. It chanced that they were all busy for a few moments about Jane, who was explaining the Bible lesson to them, and that Gypsy, turning away to the table to hunt for her Testament, came upon "The Shadow of a Life-time." It lay open where she had left it at eleven o'clock Saturday night. The lachrymose Lorina was in a thrilling crisis of her history; tangled by her hair in a thorn-bush, I believe, or something of the sort, with two wild bulls, three robbers, and a rattlesnake running after her — if rattlesnakes may, with zoölogical propriety, be said to run.

Gypsy took up the book, thinking that she would close it and put it on the shelf; turned the leaves a little, glanced up and down a page or two, looked at the next illustration, thought

she would just see whether Adolphe did not come to the rescue, sat down and read for twenty minutes.

Suddenly the girls heard a great noise. It was "The Shadow of a Life-time" flying across the room, and going crash! against the wall.

"You old thing!"

"Why, Gypsy Breynton! What old thing? The book?"

"No, *not* the book."

"Well, then; what is to pay?"

"I've been breaking the Sabbath, and I'm ashamed of myself, and that's what's to pay!" said Gypsy, with hot cheeks. One or two of the girls laughed. Nobody said anything for a minute, till Jo Courtis had recovered from her astonishment.

"My—stars! Why, I read 'Bleak House,' all last Sunday, and 'The Woman in White' all the Sunday before, and Harper stories Sunday before that, and—why, when would you do your reading if you could n't?"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself,

Courtis," said Maude Clare, with a virtuous look of reproof. "If I did such things, I would n't boast of them."

"Miss Smith did n't carry her Euclid to church, and study behind her muff, all sermon time, I suppose? Oh, no!" said Jacqueline, with her inevitable effort to be sarcastic.

"Well," said Maude Clare, sharply, but with brightened colour, "that is a different thing. Besides, it was a very unusual case; I had n't learned a solitary proposition, and if I go into recitation in that trim, Brother Ayre annihilates me."

"I think it was just the same thing," pronounced Gypsy, boldly, "we were all wrong; I was wrong, and Jo was wrong, and it was wrong in you, Maude, and — there! I won't preach a sermon, but I believe it is our business to keep the Sabbath holy."

To say just that, before a crowded roomful, before Maude Clare's vexed eyes, required — did it not, girls? — some courage.

THE Character of Cæsar." (Goodness!)

"Enthusiasm." (Picture me writing on Enthusiasm!)

"Eyes."

"Destruction of Pompeii."

"Advantages of Mathematics and other disciplinary studies." (Oh, *Horrors!*)

"Sorrowing Nature."

"Marius in the Ruins of Carthage." (Marius? Marius? Was n't he a Carthaginian General?)

"Sylvan Scenes."

"Longfellow's Psalm of Life."

"Autobiography of a (*what?* C–o–s–Cosmop — Cos–mopo — Oh, yes) Cosmopolite."

"Lost Opportunities."

"History of Judith."

Gypsy laid down the paper, and she and Maude Clare looked at each other blankly.

"Charming, are n't they?"

"Enchanting!"

"If the amiable Ayre had searched the dictionaries (I verily believe she has) for the most outrageous and impossible set of subjects, she could n't have succeeded better. I think it is a shame we have to write compositions, anyway. My sister went to school in New York, and she did n't write but one in two years."

As Maude Clare had never yet seen the subject that was not "outrageous and impossible," and had never been known to write a composition without pronouncing the task a shame, Gypsy was not as much interested as she might have been, but looked over the paper thoughtfully to choose her topic.

Maude Clare thought that she would take the "Character of Cæsar."

"If you only knew anything about him, you know!" remarked Gypsy, candidly.

"Perhaps I know more than you give me credit for, my dear. At any rate, I mean to write on Cæsar."

Jane came in, after Maude had gone, and found Gypsy perched on the arm of the rocking-chair, still groaning over the list of subjects.

"If I could be absolute monarch of America awhile, Jane Bruce, I would decree that people should all stay little girls till composition days were over; then you could write Histories of a Penny and Memorials of a Jointed Doll, to the end of the chapter. Put on waterfalls and long dresses, and they dump you into 'Enthusiasm' and such, and not a thing more do you know about them than you did in the jointed doll days. I think it is an imposition. Let me see: — 'Advantages of Math' — no, you don't catch me. 'Autobiography of' —

what, under the canopy, *is* a 'Cosmopolite'? 'Eyes' — if I should take that, Maude would make me describe Ben Sizer's eyes, and then she would blush when I read it, and I should laugh. 'Sorrowing Nature.' That sounds

prettily. 'Sylvan Scenes.' 'Sorrowing Scenes,' and 'Sylvan Na'—? Oh! Well, I think I will have one of those."

So, provided for an hour to come with pencil, paper, and cocoanut cakes, down she goes, a little heap, by the register, and the groaning recommences.

"Ugh! the hateful, horrid, hate-*ful* thing!"

"*Sorrowing Nature.*

"Nature is of a very sympathetic turn of mind, and"—Oh dear! and "sorrows—and sorrows over the griefs of the sons of the human race"—does n't she, Jane? "When we hear the rain fall, she is weeping. She is weeping. She is"—I can't think of another solitary word. I believe I 'll try the other. There!

"*Sylvan Scenes.*"

Silence. Vigorous mastication of cocoanut. "Sorrowing Nature" blows down the register. More cocoanut. Silence prolonged.

"Gypsy dear?" ventures Jane, at last.

"*Oh!* Why, I forgot! Why, where is it? If there is n't the bell for walk! Now I shall have to stay in and begin all over. The old, hate — *Would* you mind eating the rest of these cakes for me?"

After the endurance of tribulations manifold, and perils oft, and crumplings many, and poundings not a few, the unfortunate composition arrives at completion, and is folded away in fear and trembling, to await the awful inspection of Miss Ayre.

Maude Clare wrote five pages upon "The Character of Cæsar" and read them to Gypsy. Gypsy listened meekly, feeling herself utterly extinguished. It was certainly a very well written composition for a school-girl, especially for just such a school-girl as Maude Clare.

A few days after, Gypsy went to the library to hunt up Marius in the Cyclopædia, and find out what he had to do with Carthage. Turning over the leaves of C's, her eye fell upon Cæsar-

Julius, and she stopped to see what was said about him. She had read but a little way before a curious expression came into her face, her eyes opened wide, and her cheeks grew very red.

She finished the account, lifted the heavy book upon her shoulder, and went, Carthage and Marius forgotten, straight to Maude Clare.

She placed the book upon her lap, and placed her finger upon the article and held it there.

"Well?" said Maude Clare, "what of it?" But she changed colour.

"What of it? Why Maude, that is just your composition. There is n't a difference of twenty words!"

"Twenty words are a good many," returned Maude, coolly. "I altered it wherever I could think of anything else to say. I never *copy* things every word, as Jack does. It seems to me you are growing wofully fussy over nothing lately, Gypsy."

Gypsy turned round and walked away.

"Gypsy, *ma belle!*" called Maude, "I did n't mean to be cross."

But Gypsy went downstairs.

GOLDEN CRESCENT, SKY PARLOUR,
January 31.

MOTHER DEAR, — Sky Parlour is my room, you know, — I believe I never told you. All our rooms have names. Maude Clare's is "Robin's Nest," and the Colchetts' is "Sleepy Hollow," — that is because they 're always late to breakfast. The room Phœbe Hand and Miss Ayre have is "Parsonage." Poor Mademoiselle has a funny little room all to herself, and that is "Spinster."

But I did n't mean to stop to talk about this, for I 'm in a hurry, and I want to tell you about those Compos.

You see I hate to write them, and Maude hates to, and we all hate to, and nobody has decent ones but Jane and Lou Armstrong. Lou writes poetry, and Jane wrote the most splendid one on the "Destruction of Pom-

peii," and the teachers think everything of her.

Now, I did the best I could, mother, really. You know what a little goose I am, don't you? and how I don't know anything; besides, I never was known to string five words together straight yet; they all tumble over each other, into a jumble. So I wrote about "Sorrowing Nature," and it blew down the register, and then I wrote on "Sylvan Scenes."

Here 's a copy if you want to read it.

"*Sylvan Scenes.*

"How beautiful is the face of Nature in all her varying moods! Especially in the country.

"Go forth at early morn, and see the sun rising in all his majesty. See the blushing clouds that he kisses on his way. See the gold on the mountains, and the great shadows in the forest, and the sparkling glittering diamond dew-drops that are nodding about on the clover-leaves. Hear the feathered songsters in their nests, and the brooks warbling over the stones, &c.

"Go forth at noon, and how pleasant to rest under the shade, protected from the rays of the hot sun.

"Go forth at night, when the silver moon is

beaming, or the stars shine coldly down upon the earth. Does not everything whisper of the wisdom of its Creator, and — "

There was some more, but I didn't finish this copy, and I've forgotten it. I wish they wouldn't give us subjects. One time I chose my own, and I wrote on "My Cat," and described Winnie's, and Miss Ayre said it was very — something — sprightly, I believe. Then another time I wrote on "Blunders," and Mrs. McMunn laughed till she cried.

But you see I didn't know anything about those old historical subjects, nor enthusiasm, nor any of the rest, so I did the best I could with "Sylvan Scenes." I meant to make it sound like pictures, somehow, but it wouldn't.

So Compo day came, and we all had to read, and mine would have been as good as almost any except Jane's and Lou's, if it hadn't been for something that two or three of the girls did, that I wouldn't have done for the world. They copied. That's what they did. Everybody expected it of Jack — she always does, and

Miss Ayre knows it. But there was another girl — I sha'n't tell you her name — and she copied, all but a few words, from the Cyclopædia. It was about Cæsar, and it sounded so grand, and we sat close together, and it made mine sound so horrid, and there was such a difference.

The worst of it was, — Miss Ayre complimented *her* like everything, and then said she thought there was room for improvement in Miss Breynton, and I felt so ashamed, and the other girl did n't say anything. I know she did n't mean to make me feel badly, and I don't think she meant to do wrong, for I have heard her say she never *means* to do wrong; but she ought not to have done it, I suppose.

At any rate, I 'm glad I did n't copy "Sylvan Scenes." And I *could n't* copy, mother, if I never wrote a decent composition to the end of my days, and if Miss Ayre blames me, I can't help it.

If I were a girl in a story-book, I suppose Miss Ayre would find out about that other girl

and Cæsar, and then she would praise me up, and we should have a great time.

But she does n't do any such thing. I wish I lived in a story-book. It would be nice.

Once I read about a girl who wrote a "glowing composition" on the "Future," and it took a prize. Do you suppose I could write a glowing composition on the Future?

Love to Father and Winnie.

Your everlasting GYPSY.

There was a postscript added and erased. It is given for the benefit of the curious: —

Maude Clare is so pretty. I do like to watch her. I wish she would n't sit with her window open so much; I am afraid she will take cold. Poor Miss Holly has to sit in her furs, and cough. *She* says that Maude sits there to see Ben Sizer go by, but Maude says she likes the air. I wish there were n't any boys in Snapberry.

I THINK it is about time to say what perhaps I ought to have said in a proper little preface, or introduction, or dedication, that if you took up this book, girls, expecting to find it a miniature novel, of thickly woven plot and heroine extraordinary, of all exciting incidents and contretemps, such as seldom happen at school, except in story-books, you will certainly be disappointed.

It is simply my business to describe Gypsy's school-days at the Golden Crescent, just as they happened; and Gypsy's school-days, I fancy, were very much like the school-days of other girls. Nobody stole a gold-pencil and slipped

it into her pocket; or a ten-dollar bill, and put it into her trunk. Nobody burnt her prize composition the night before it was to be read. Most of the girls were ladies, and, in general, behaved like such. The Mondays and Tuesdays, the Saturdays and Sundays, followed each other quietly, with just such amount of study and headache, of "blues" and homesickness, of fun and frolic, of little ambitions and rivalries, of making and breaking friendships, as Mondays and Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays are apt to bring. Of such flashes of extra excitement as occurred now and then, it shall be faithfully told you.

None of Gypsy's schoolmates chanced to be entirely bad or entirely good. If Maude Clare was selfish and unladylike, she was affectionate and of gentle manners.

If Jane was self-forgetful and industrious, she was reserved and did not easily make friends. Poor little shallow Jack, I think, was almost as much to be pitied as blamed. Lou Armstrong was a scholar, but she would break rules

Ab uno disce omnes. Gypsy herself was very much, as she used to say, "Never one thing for five minutes." She was into mischief, out of it, in again, a dozen times a week. If there was any golden lesson that the year brought her, — and I think there was, — one could scarcely catch sight of its broken fragments day by day. She seemed to be living, as so many girls seem to live, like a leaf upon a breeze; but the wind bloweth where it listeth, and who can tell whither it will go?

So I give you her story as she gave it to me, — the "scrapes" and the penitence, the learning and unlearning, a word here, a glimpse of character there, a bit of fun, a sorry thought, a dream, a rude deceiving, a self-acquaintance — I give you just her days and nights, her terms and vacations, as they marked her memory and moulded her life.

One day Gypsy went up to desolate "Spinster," to ask Mademoiselle the meaning of a sentence in the Telemaque lesson. Mademoiselle was sitting alone in the dark and cold, crying,

"How funny!" said Gypsy to herself, and forgot it by the time that she was downstairs. Not long after, she was in the music-room practising alone, when Mademoiselle came in.

"Oh, Mees Gypsy — pardonnez! I leave the dictionnaire in here."

"Come in, oh, come in," said Gypsy, carelessly, running over "Don Giovanni" as she spoke. "You can stay if you want to; you don't disturb me."

The piano stool stood just between two windows, in a corner, and Gypsy, as she bent forward a little to read her notes, her lips parted and smiling, and her pretty head nodding time unconsciously, was all framed in by the late western light. Her face, especially, was touched out brightly.

Mademoiselle did a queer thing. She forgot all about the "dictionnaire," and stood still in the middle of the room, and threw up her hands once in an odd way she had, like some one lonely or in pain. Then coming suddenly up behind Gypsy, she drew her face back into

her hands, and kissed her on the forehead. Before Gypsy could speak, she had left the room.

The freak of Mademoiselle's has no particular connection with this chapter, except that it happened about the same time. But Gypsy had afterwards occasion to remember it.

About the middle of the term there came a long, dreary, drifting snow-storm. The Golden Crescent was blocked up for two or three days, and the girls were restless enough before they were over. Especially Gypsy, used as she was to long walks every day in the fresh winter air, was thrown into much the condition of bottled cider. Give the cork a little screw, and beware of the results!

A crowd of girls assembled in council at the end of one of the short, dark afternoons, in the garret where they had been playing Blind Man's Buff to beguile the time.

"Oh, I wish there was something magnificent and funny to do!" sighed Gypsy, drearily. "I wish I could go out and swim about through those drifts."

"Dear me, I should be afraid," said Jacqueline.

"Afraid!" echoed Gypsy, in supreme contempt. "What is there to be afraid of? Would n't it be fun! I don't see why Mrs. M. won't let me."

Jo Courtis was looking over some old things in a corner of the garret, — dresses and hoods,

and female attire of various sorts, that were waiting there for the rag-man or the Town-Poor Society. All at once she shouted.

"Why, Jo, what is the matter?"

"I 've thought — oh, dear me! I've thought of the very way. There 's an hour yet before it 's quite dark. Hush! come here."

Gypsy came.

Awhile after, a negro woman made her appearance in the kitchen. She wore an old calico dress, a faded shawl, and a ragged hood. She held in her hand an old spotted lace veil. Dolly jumped and screamed.

"Hush — sh!" said the negro, choking down a laugh, and, coming up, she whispered something in her ear.

"Oh, the good Land! Oh, good gracious! You 'll be me death of laughing some fine day. Oh, Miss Gyp —"

"Hush! Will you do it? It 's a real pretty veil, — see; and so becoming. You shall have it the moment I come back, if you let me in like a good girl, and keep still. If anybody

should be in the kitchen, why, I 'll just make you a call. Is it a bargain?"

Dolly considered, and nodded. She opened the door softly, and the negress went out into the snow. She made her way unobserved into the street, went up a little way, crossed over, came back, rang the front door-bell, and asked for Mrs. McMunn.

Dolly stuffed her apron into her mouth, and gave a little gasp.

"Missus McMunn," repeated the visitor, with consummate surprise at Dolly's behaviour. "My good friend, I ask for Missus McMunn. Hain't ye neber seen a nigger 'fore? 'Pears like you finds it bery funny."

Dolly composed herself with a bewildered look, and brought Mrs. McMunn to the door.

"Good-afternoon," said the Principal, in surprise; "I am Mrs. McMunn. What can you want of me this bitter day?"

"It 's bery cold out here," said the negro, shivering. "If ye 'll let me jes' step inside de door, 'pears like I ken tell ye easier."

Mrs. McMunn allowed her to step in upon the hall mat, and stood regarding her compassionately.

"Now what is it you want — a supper?"

"No, missus."

"Clothes?"

"No, missus."

"What, then, — money?"

"I wants," said the negro, with solemnity, — "I wants de pattern of your waterfall, ef ye please, missus."

A suppressed titter ran along the banister in the upper hall.

"Young ladies!" said the Principal, with crimson face, "I am surprised at your levity. I should not have supposed that you would ridicule a poor lunatic negro like this. My poor woman, I think you had better go, unless you will take some supper."

"I hearn a heap 'bout dat ar' waterfall ob yourns," said the negro, regretfully; "folks say it 's so peart an' graceful like. I have heaps of trubble wid my waterfall, and I — "

But Mrs. McMunn had gently shut the door upon her.

The girls, watching at the garret window, saw her taking her way up the street, through the drifts.

"How she does flounder about! She has on rubber boots, you know. Looks as if she were having a good time, does n't she? What is she going to do next, I wonder?"

What she did was to call at several houses on the Main street where she was acquainted, asking either for mistress or maid, as the fancy suited her, begging for supper, coppers, Garibaldi patterns, gold bracelets, Bibles, cayenne pepper, anything that occurred to her at the moment.

"Poor crazy thing!" said everybody, which was precisely what she meant that everybody should say.

Now, there lived in Snapberry a Mr. Short, a tobacco-grower, and an agent of the Colonisation Society; in whose service he lectured through his nose, whenever he could find an audience; and by his self-denying labour and

missionary spirit, earned, it was said, exactly his own salary. To the house of Mr. Short the negro went with mischief in her eyes. She asked for supper, and a shelter from the storm. She had heard of his interest in the coloured race, and felt sure that he would help her.

"I help those that help themselves," replied Mr. Short, who had been called away from a cigar, and felt cross. "It's poor benevolence to help wandering beggars, black or white. If you had appreciated your privileges and gone to Liberia, where you belong, in that last colony we sent out free of expense, to roam in their ancestral forests, you would n't be here begging to-day, I suppose, would you?"

She meekly replied that she supposed not.

"Well, then, don't come to me," said Mr. Short, shutting the door. "I've done my duty by you. If you *won't* go to a happier clime and roam in your ancestral forests, you must take the consequences."

A little distance beyond the amiable Mr. Short's something quite unexpected happened.

Deacon Popkins, the Overseer of the Poor, was out toiling through the drifts with horse and sleigh to the Office; and Deacon Popkins, peering from under his fur cap, saw the wretched figure of the negro blown about by the wind.

"Hallo!" shouted he, reining up.

"Hud d'ye, massa?" said the figure, hurrying on.

"Here, stop there! Whar ye goin' this sort of night, that style? I'm Town Overseer, and you jes' tell me your business if you please."

"I — I don' know," said Gypsy, unwilling to manufacture a story even in her disguise. "I thank ye kindly, sir, but I'm done used to taking care of myself."

"Worse for you if you are, then," said Deacon Popkins, climbing briskly from his sleigh. "I'm Town Overseer, I say, and it's my business to pick up vagrants, and see 'em safe in the Poor-us; and as for findin' you froze in a drift somewhars to-morrow morning, it would be onconvenient to all parties; so, if you please, mum, you may jes' step in, an' we'll go 'long now."

Here was a charming little combination of circumstances, verily! Gypsy began to have a suspicion that her fun was turning into most uncomfortable earnest, and, moreover, that she had been doing a very imprudent thing. Not seeing exactly how to help herself, and hoping that a chance for escaping without detection would occur, she climbed into the sleigh reluctantly, and Deacon Popkins carried her straight to the Poor-house.

Once fairly in the dreary entry, consigned for the night as a "nigger vagrant," to the care of a vinegar-faced matron, with Deacon Popkins rapidly taking his departure, Gypsy felt that her hour had come.

"Deacon Popkins?" she said faintly. He did not hear; he was already in the sleigh.

"Deacon *Pop*kins!"

"Well, what's the matter now?" said the Deacon, standing impatiently with the reins in his hand.

"I — I'm not a negro, and I think I'll go home now."

The deacon laughed loudly.

"Poor crazy critter, you! Not a nigger! Ha, ha, ha!" and he was driving off. Gypsy broke away from the detaining hands of the sour matron, flew down the steps, and out into the snow after him.

"Deacon Popkins, I really can't stay in a Poor-house all night, and I'm not any more of a negro now than you are."

"Waal, mum, if you ain't a nigger, you 're the blackest white gal ever *I* see; that's all. G'lang, Billy!"

"Shake hands and see!" cried Gypsy in despair, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. She held out her corked hand all wet with snow, and the deacon drew off his mitten and shook it violently. It would have been difficult, after this proceeding, to say which hand was the blacker.

"I — vum!" said the deacon, slowly.

"Told you so!" cried Gypsy, determined to make sure of the matter. "See here!" Up went a handful of snow upon her forehead,

over her cheeks, across her chin, down her neck. The effect was absolutely indescribable.

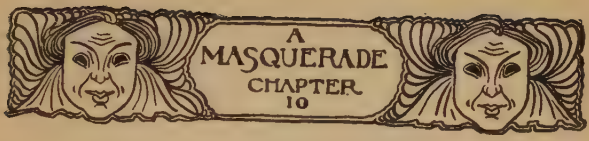
"There, now! I'm nothing but Gypsy Breynton blacked up. Don't you see?"

She turned her face, all streaks of white, and rivers of black, full upon him, and the Town Overseer sat back in his sleigh and laughed till the matron thought that he had a stroke of apoplexy, and came running out with a pitcher of half-frozen water, which she poured all over him.

Gypsy found her way back to the Crescent safely, and Dolly let her in at the back door just as the tea-bell rang.

But the next day the whole town had the story, and in due time it came to Mrs. McMunn.

She could not keep sober long enough to give Gypsy the scolding that she richly deserved, but Miss Ayre kindly made up the deficiency.



"JANE BRUCE is developing."

Mary Blunt said this, standing with her poplin skirt half folded over her arm.

"Developing?"

"Yes, all round. (I think she mended this trimming for me really very well, did n't she?) She always was one of your goodish kind, and helped you shell popped-corn, and was sorry when you were sick, and would n't tickle you at devotions, and all that; but don't you see how she 's spruced up and bloomed out lately? She rushes round and laughs, and gets acquainted like anybody else; and she is actually witty when she sets about it. Besides, her dresses did n't use to fit, and now she really

takes pains to come out in decent style like other girls — not exactly *à la* Paris, to be sure, Jane does n't go into that sort of thing; but it is an improvement, — an improvement. I must say, if you 're going to have good people, I like that kind. I don't like to see a girl spend a hundred dollars on lace trimming, and then go and pray in it at a missionary meeting. Not but that I had rather have the velvet, but then — "

"Yes," said Gypsy. "Yes, Jane is a nice girl. I don't see as much of her, though, if she is my room-mate, as I do of ever so many others. I don't know why. I 'm almost always with Maude. You see she *is n't* half as pretty, and stylish, and graceful, and sweet, and loving, as Maude Clare. But then," with a little sigh, "I don't suppose Maude is good."

"Not exactly, — no," said Mary, with a short laugh.

"Now, Jane, for instance, would n't laugh," pursued Gypsy, glad to change the subject, "at that little performance the other morning."

"Oh, it was you, was it? I suspected as much."

"Yes; don't you tell, though. I went," — Gypsy's eyes began to twinkle at the memory, — "I went into the music-room early to practise, and I was tired of Tam O'Shanter, and something put it into my head, I'm sure I don't know what — and I did n't mean to do anything bad — but I thought how funny to write it and pin it up on the mantelpiece before they all came in to prayers. Then, you know, it happened that they two came in together so nicely — Mrs. McMunn was sick, and Miss A. took her place; and they marched in arm-in-arm, and saw it in the great letters — Oh dear!

"*New and interesting Chemical Experiments! Union of Air and Gas! Fearful Explosions looked for.*

"The chaplain turned as red as a beet. Don't you want some flag-root?"

"Thank you. I know it, and Miss Ayre was just as white and angry, all except her chin; that is always red."

"They do really say they are engaged, any way; Jack Delancey found her sitting in his lap in the front parlour — she says. Poor Mr. Goss! He can't get over it; and he goes about so meekly, and blushes every time he sees a girl. Altogether, he is the most sublimely uncomfortable mortal I ever looked at. Peanuts? Why! why not?"

"Why, I'm sorry," said Gypsy, the twinkling dying away. "I never meant anything but fun. I should like to tell him so. What do you suppose Jane said about it, though?"

"Oh! that you had broken the Ten Commandments, perhaps."

"No. She just said she should n't think it would pay."

"Just like Jane. Have a cream-cake?"

"No, thank you. If you will let me have your little hammer — you said I might? — I 'll go back now and fix my trunk. I sha'n't get packed till midnight at this rate, and neither will you, if you don't stop eating."

She stopped in the doorway, thinking.

"I wonder if it *did* pay. I wonder if it ever pays."

Mary was too much engaged in emptying her pockets of cooky crumbs to make answer; so Gypsy went away to her own room.

The end of the long winter term had come, and six ecstatic weeks of vacation were at hand.

Gypsy stuffed her stove with compositions, packed her trunks, and went home.

And no sooner was she there, as it seemed, than it was time to turn about and go back again.

Jane Bruce had spent her vacation in having a severe influenza, and was not strong enough to come back at the beginning of the term.

Maude Clare's sister was going to be married, and Maude was to stay over the wedding.

Gypsy, left alone, invited Josephine Courtis to share her room with her till Jane or Maude came back.

"Oh, my good gracious!" cried Miss Delancey. "Why, she sha'n't! Why, I would n't

be hired to sleep alone one night, for any money you could give me. My sister Belle always has to sleep with me at home; and if she is away visiting, I make mother come; or else I have one of the servants sleep on the couch. Why, I should die of fright before morning!"

"Fright! What can you find to be afraid of, I should like to know?"

"Oh, I don't know; robbers, and ghosts, and spiritual rappings, and fifty things. I have an aunt who saw her candlestick walk right out into the air off the mantelpiece, one night, and how do I know but that I should see mine walking, if I slept alone! I always cover my head up in the clothes, anyway, and I always make Josephine sleep the front side; don't I, Jo?"

"We-*ell!*" said contemptuous Gypsy, slowly. "If I enjoyed being an infant, I'd be an infant, but it would be a good while before I would boast of it."

"It is very nice to talk," said Jacqueline,

colouring, "but I should like to know what you want of my room-mate if you 're not afraid just as much as I am."

"I want her because she is funny, and good company to have round, and I never was afraid to sleep alone, since I dispensed with nurses! If you won't believe me, I'll go and spend a night up garret, for I should be *ashamed* to have anybody think I was afraid."

Now, the garret at the Golden Crescent was a dismal place; dark with cobwebs, frowning with shadows, ghostly with old quilts and cast-off garments; moreover, the wind shrieked, with an extremely unpleasant sound, down the huge old-fashioned chimneys. Therefore, incredulous Jacqueline screamed at Gypsy's proposal, and said that it made her cold so much as to think of it.

Gypsy made herself up a bed under the eaves, and at nine o'clock that night, went up, a stout-faced, white-robed little figure, dragging a pillow, and slept there, true to her word, till morning.

Jacqueline went up herself at six o'clock to wake her, and be sure that there was no hoax about it.

The girls rushed to Gypsy's room while she was dressing, to hear about it.

"How did you ever dare to?"

"Were n't you awfully scared?"

"Did n't you lie awake all night?"

"And did n't you *once* think you saw a ghost?"

"Or a candlestick walking?"

"Oh, I would n't have done it for anything!"

"Nor I!"

"Think of it!"

"Such a quantity of rats and spiders! Why, I 'm as afraid of a mouse as I can be."

"Well," said Jacqueline, finishing the chorus, "it is very well for you; you don't mind thunder-showers, and you did n't scream when we upset on that sleigh-ride, and you 're not afraid of robbers, but *I* am nervous. I am so timid — mother says I am the most timid child she ever had."

It required all Gypsy's politeness to keep out of her face and tones the little flash of scorn with which she heard this remark.

"Jacqueline Delancey, you really talk as if you thought it were a *pretty* thing to be 'timid'!"

And Jacqueline looked very much as if she thought so, which was more.

"I really don't see," persisted Gypsy, — "I really don't see why a girl should be a goose, *because* she is a girl. Now, if my brother Tom were here, and had slept up garret, would you ask him if he was afraid, or would you think it an insult?"

"Of course I should n't ask him!"

"Well, then, if it would be unmanly in him to be afraid of nothing, I say it is unwomanly in me to be afraid of nothing, and what's more I won't be! Now, where did I leave that hair-brush?"

Mademoiselle, when she heard of the matter, proposed to sleep with Jacqueline, in order that Jo might be free to make the visit to Sky

Parlour. The offer must have been quite a little sacrifice on the part of the French Teacher, for Miss Delancey was anything but an agreeable room-mate, had always been one of her most troublesome scholars, and had barely treated her with civility. It was evident that Mademoiselle had taken a fancy to Gypsy.

So Josephine "struck tents," as she said, with Gypsy, for the time in which her room-mate should be away. The time became a week, became a fortnight, and Jane had not come, nor Maude.

Put two such impulsive, out-spoken girls as Jo and Gypsy in the same room, on equal footing of privilege, for fourteen days, and they are apt at the end to understand each other about as well as they would in fourteen years. Had Maude Clare, instead of Jo, been subjected to the test, Gypsy would not have been so long in discovering some things that she did discover about her friend. Josephine was one of those people whose faults and virtues, equally, make more impression on one the more one knows

of them: the faults were not easily "put up with:" the virtues did not lessen through familiarity.

She was, unmistakably, what Gypsy had pronounced her, — "good company." She was well, and strong, and happy; never had headaches or "blues;" never was homesick, never cried or moped; she overflowed with fun and jest, — nine-tenths of it girl's pointless chatter, one-tenth genuine wit. Moreover, she had a good large Western heart, that took in with especial fervour the person with whom she happened to be at any particular moment. A generous room-mate she certainly was; she never growled at making the bed; she took her turn in dusting the room; she would kindly volunteer to read magazine stories aloud to one while one was studying Virgil, and of her taffy one had invariably the lion's share.

But good company is not always the best. If, the more Gypsy saw of her, the more she liked her for her kind heart, the more her rough nature grated.

Jo was loud of laughter and noisy of speech, she shouted on the street; she sung at the window when boys were going by; she would carelessly break a rule, and carelessly be impertinent to a teacher; she was not of nice culture in matters of etiquette or personal habit; she would jest wittily, sometimes blasphemously, at things of sacred name.

Now, none of this could hurt Gypsy. Impulsive and unceremonious though she was, from roughness, from open breaches of the laws of courtesy and refinement, nature and training led her to revolt; and she believed with simple and confiding reverence in the God to whom she "talked" every night after that other talk with her mother.

But there was one respect in which Josephine Courtis did her positive harm; and as I believe that there are few merry, mimicking girls like Gypsy who do not fall at some time or other into the same trap, I shall mention it, at risk of being accused of delaying, by an interminable sermon, that masquerade

with which I so inappropriately headed this chapter.

Jo inclined to "being a boy." She liked to be called Jo. She liked better to be called Courtis. She was sorry that she was made a woman. She wished she were a man. She liked to wear noisy boots and round turbans. She affected paper collars and broad neckties, and turned back the lappets of her sacque. She *always* walked with her hands in her pockets. She whistled well, and whistled a great deal. She talked slang.

When Gypsy had roomed with her about a week, it was observed that she had cut over her hat into a turban; that she was whistling a good deal; that she had a mannish little way of opening and shutting doors, splashing through mud-puddles, giving her orders at the stores. She learned to touch her hat to the girls when she met them in the street, and she liked to offer them her arm at a concert. In fact, it was the little hoyden of a few years ago, coming out in new and more dignified shape.

And as for slang, she scarcely talked anything else. Josephine was Courtis, invariably. The absent Jane was appropriately referred to as Bruce. McMunn and the Amiable Ayre were the established cognomens of her teachers, while poor Mr. Goss, whose Christian name the girls had discovered on a card in one of Miss Ayre's books, was designated respectfully as the Lovely Leonard.

A bad lesson was a "flunk," or a "fizzle," or a "slump." A fine recitation was a "rush." The meetings of The Evergreen Sisters were "bums." A party was a "spree." A little difficulty with a teacher was a "row." A room-mate was a "chum." Pleasant girls were "good fellows," &c., &c., &c., in variety without end.

Now, as Mrs. Breynton knew from week to week just about what Gypsy was living, she very soon noticed the growth of this doubtful accomplishment, and when at last she received a letter written from beginning to end in this style, —

"Chum and I got into a regular row eating dates in one of McMunn's classes, and I think it's a bothering bore to have to cram so on Roman History. I don't like to be scolded better than the next man, and wouldn't it be jolly if vacation were here?"

Gypsy had by the next mail the following: —

MY DEAR DAUGHTER, — I return your letter, which, owing to my long habit of corresponding in English, I am unable to translate. A vocabulary perhaps would be of service, if you have one to spare.

If you have given up all intention of becoming a young lady, I can undoubtedly find a school where they will make a boy of you to order; perhaps you would enjoy yourself at Andover or Exeter; or shall it be Harvard at once? Please give me early notice of your preference, that I may have time to look about.

There might, to be sure, be some little inconvenience to me in the arrangement, as you hap-

pen to be my only daughter, and three sons *would* be a good many, but still —

Affectionately,

MOTHER.

To which Gypsy made answer:

"Why, mother! Why, Mother Breynton! Why, I would n't be a boy for anything in the world. I think they 're horrid!"

And quickly back came the reply, —

"Well then, my dear, don't *try* to be a boy. You remember the poor little swan who could n't be a duck? Everybody laughed at her, you know.

"If you decide to be a woman, be a woman. It may be as brave and strong and bright and learned and independent a woman as it chooses, but it must not degrade itself by aping something which it was never destined to be, and never can be, try as hard as it may.

"Furthermore, my dear, I really — don't see how I could have a daughter of mine grow up other than a lady.

"A lady never talks slang. And these habits which you are forming just now, will cling to you like burs, long after school-days are over. So, shall this be the end of my refractory duckling's career?"

I believe that it was.

Lou Armstrong was talking about a masquerade, in these days. These masquerades — held on holiday evenings, in which the girls were their own hostesses and cavaliers, and to which the lady teachers were invited as spectators — were hereditary amusements at the Golden Crescent, handed down from class to class. It should be observed, however, that the term "masquerade" was a title more honorary than appropriate. Nobody masked but the homely girls. It was not becoming.

"We can go into the Music Room," said Lou, "and — let me see; who will play for us?"

"Mr. Schleiermacher," suggested Josephine.

"No, indeed! We don't want a man look-

ing on. I guess Emma Colchett will play. Let us get it up in style, and have a subscription for oysters — Dolly will cook them for a pair of cuffs. As for characters and dresses, I 've thought of some that are mag. Queen Marie. Jeanne d'Arc. Leicester, and *his* Queen. Zenobia — "

" Yes, and Sappho."

" And King Lear, and that old — what 's his name? John Burns? who fought in the old white hat at Gettysburg, or somewhere."

" Good! Then flower-girls and gypsies to fill up, of course Josephine, you must be Leicester, and I 'll be Bess."

" Lou Armstrong, you know nobody else can be Sappho. Put on ivy-leaves, and take off your waterfall. Let Mary Blunt be Queen Bess; her hair is just the colour."

" And Gypsy? Gypsy Breynton? What shall she be?"

" Oh, let me be a page, a funny little page with a cap on. I will wait on Queen Marie, I believe."

Maude Clare had been written to about the masquerade, and if she came back in time, she was to be Marie. Not a little flattered that she should be chosen as the "Bonnie Queen," Maude thought that she should be back in time.

As it chanced, she and Jane came in the same train; and they came just after supper, the very night of the masquerade.

Jane looked tired and pale, when she came upstairs. Gypsy gave her one hurried kiss, and bounded away to Maude Clare, to fondle and pet and squeeze her, to scream over her, and laugh at her, and question her, and pinch her in a bewilderment of joy. Never had Maude so fascinated her by her little graceful ways and caresses; never had she looked so white and pink and pretty, so stylish, or so dear, as after their long separation.

"And you have come just in time to be Queen Marie, my pretty Queen Marie! Made your dress at home? Oh, splendid! Real lace collar, and pearls in your hair? Oh, Maude, you *will* be a queen!"

"I shall have a blossom of a page, I think, *mignon*. See here, Gypsy, who do you think has come back? Somebody."

"Not that old — "

"Yes. Ben Sizer."

"But I thought he went back to College long ago."

"So he did; but he is here again. He came on in the cars with me."

"Why! how did he know what train you were coming in?"

"Oh, I dropped him a line," said Maude, carelessly.

"They say," observed Gypsy, "that he was rusticated from Harvard, and that's how he came here."

"I don't believe it!" said Maude, indignantly. "He says he comes for his health. I suppose he studied too hard."

The idea of Mr. Benjamin Sizer studying too hard so amused Gypsy that she hurried away to dress, without venturing on any further remarks.

A very pretty little page she made, when that dressing was over. She had compounded a graceful tunic out of a broad crimson silk scarf and sash, with trimmings of gilt paper. The full, Oriental-looking trousers, which came down closely about her ankles, were (but nobody would have thought it) made of old white cotton-cloth, covered with figures of every colour cut from silk and cashmere, and sewed on. She wore white kid gloves with scarlet gauntlets, and carried a riding-whip. Her hair was caught up on top of her head out of sight, the short side brushed out around her temples, and over it was the jauntiest little blue velvet cap with silver tassels. This was Jacqueline Delancey's skating-cap; rather showy for a skating-cap, but very suitable for Queen Marie's page.

As Gypsy was hurrying to the music-room in the little flush and excitement which comes from the consciousness that one looks pretty and that one is going to have a very good time, she passed by Phœbe Hand's room. The door

stood partly open. Miss Ayre had gone already to the masquerade, and Phœbe sat there alone.

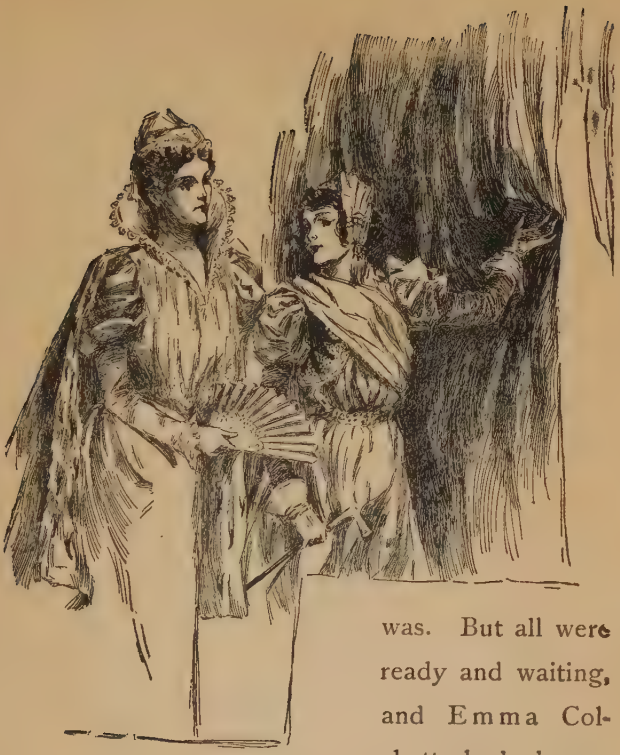
"Coming, Phœbe, are n't you? Why! why not?"

"I don't care to," said Phœbe, sadly; and Gypsy saw that her eyes were red with crying.

"Why, Phœbe, what 's the matter? I wish you 'd come. I should think it would be horrid sitting here all alone."

"I can't — I don't want to," murmured Phœbe, turning her face away. "I can't dance, you know. I never can do what the rest do. Nobody will miss me."

"Now," said Gypsy to herself, thinking fast, "if anybody *had* thought! She might have been dressed up into a very nice enchanted Princess who could n't move, and sat on the sofa in a long white veil." She lingered a moment in the doorway, sorry and uncomfortable, wondering if she ought to leave the poor girl so; if she could comfort her up a little, or coax her to come in with the rest just as she



was. But all were ready and waiting, and Emma Colchett had begun to play, and the lights flashed, and Queen Marie was calling impatiently for her page — she could not go to a masquerade without a page.

"Fidelio! Fidelio! Gypsy!"

So Gypsy shut Phœbe's door softly, and ran away, and there was a buzz in the music-room when Fidelio announced the Queen, — it was really as loyal a sight as ever was seen.

Such a pretty, gay roomful as it was! There was Maude in her rich, conspicuous costume, — her own white alpaca with its long trail, trimmed heavily with lace of silver paper; over her shoulders black velvet edged with ermine (cotton-wool and ink-spots, that ermine), the "real lace" about her throat and turned back in long cuffs from her wrists, and on her hair the delicate point of lace and pearls, that became her as it might have done the very face of the bonnie Queen.

There was Leicester with sash and sword (pasteboard), and his haughty Queen with her huge ruff.

Sappho wore her ivy-wreath, and a beautiful young poet she made.

Jeanne d'Arc bore herself with a military air, and old John Burns chose her for a partner. Sad Zenobia appeared in chains, and there was

a funny little King Lear — the shortest girl in school — with a long white flaxen braid. Jacqueline Delancey was a flower-girl, because it was becoming; Miss Holly was a ghost, and

wore a mask; and there was the usual proportion of gypsies and Indians.

Just after they had begun to dance, several of the girls noticed a tall Benedictine friar, who had come in a little late. The Queen of Scots, it was said, waited to be confessed by him be-

fore she could join in the dance with a clear conscience. He now attended her zealously, counting his beads.

As he was masked, there was a little speculation at first as to his identity, till some one suggested Jane Bruce.

"Rather tall for Jane, seems to me."

"Why, no; Jane is tall, and it makes such a difference going without hoops."

"It must be Jane," decided Gypsy, "for when I asked her what she should be, she said she did not know certainly that she should come, but if she did, she should probably be a monk; that is the quickest thing to get up; you know there's that old black cloth up garret that Mrs. M. said we might use."

So nobody thought any more about the Benedictine friar, and when, sometime before the party broke up, he went away, he was hardly missed.

"Tired, I suppose," thought Gypsy, "she has gone to bed."

The girls kept up their merry play till ten

o'clock; Dolly brought in the oysters, Mrs. McMunn thanked them for the entertainment, and they broke up with a sense of brilliant success.

Queen Marie and her page made their adieus to Emma Colchett together (poor Emma had to be hostess and musician in one), and went upstairs. Maude Clare did look magnificently that night. Her cheeks were hot with nervous colour, and her eyes dry and bright, with excitement.

"Maude, you are — just — beautiful!" said her pretty page, throwing his most unpagelike arms about her neck.

"Thank you, dear," said Maude Clare wearily, shrinking a little from her caress. "I am tired. I think I will go to bed. See, poor Miss Holly wants to go to sleep, and we should disturb her talking."

Jane was in bed and asleep when Gypsy went to her room. The next morning the girls assembled to talk over the masquerade, and a strange fact came out.

Jane was not the Benedictine friar. Jane spent the evening with Phœbe Hand.

What did it mean?

It was many days before Gypsy knew what every girl in school knew before her, what none were quite willing to tell her, — what I believe none of the teachers at the Golden Crescent know, to this day.

Jacqueline Delancey finally told her.

"Gypsy, who was the Benedictine friar?"

"I don't know, I 'm sure."

"I do."

Jacqueline whispered something in her ear.

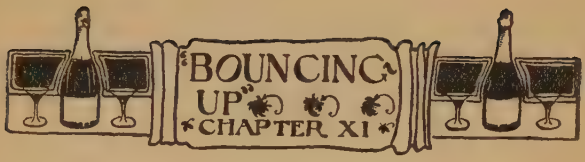
"*What?*"

"Yes — she let him in the side door, by the piazza; and he went out the same way, early, before we broke up."

"But — but I don't understand. Will you say the name over?"

Jacqueline said the name over. I cannot say that Jacqueline did not take a relish in the saying.

The Benedictine friar was no other than Mr Benjamin Sizer.



UT I did n't mean anything but fun, and he wanted to come so as to dance with me, and when he said, 'Please,' I could n't help myself. I never meant to be mean, and I never thought you 'd be so cross with me, Gypsy," sobbed repentant Queen Marie.

And how could Gypsy be cross? Shocked and angry and grieved as she was, wounded and astonished that her beautiful Maude should do this thing, how could she bear it to see her in such distress and mortification, her handsome face disfigured with tears, her bright hair falling neglected against her shoulders? (It

made her look prettier than ever, but it never occurred to Gypsy that Maude might think of that.) At any rate, she did n't bear it. She had scolded Maude roundly at first, in the frankest of Gypsy fashion. Now, she began to wonder if she had not been too severe. She herself had been into mischief too often, to throw very heavy stones at another; and though she was sure that she should never have done this thing that Maude had done, yet, after all, was Maude very much more to blame than herself? And if Maude could n't help it when he said "Please!" (conceited little monkey, to think himself so irresistible!) and was it not some excuse when one liked a handsome fellow who would take all that trouble to have a dance with one? and so, relenting slowly, she stopped scolding, and drew a little nearer to Maude, and looked at her sorrowfully.

Upon this, Maude Clare cried all the harder, and sobbed till she could hardly catch her breath. "She knew that Gypsy thought she was a hateful old thing, and she supposed of

course she had n't any pity for her, and did n't know how hard it was to be separated from anybody you liked a whole winter, and have him come back so suddenly and look so handsome. She did n't suppose Gypsy had the charity to forgive her — though she was sorry of course, and never meant to do so again, never — and the future looked very dark; there were a great many Shadows in her heart, and this was another; Gypsy was the only friend she had in the world who understood and appreciated her, or had ever been a congenial spirit or had any sympathy, and now she had lost her, and was left to take her dark way through life alone, and nobody would care, and — and — "

By this time Gypsy was crying in concert; so they kissed each other, and Maude looked very pretty, and Gypsy said that she should always love her, but she *did* wish she would n't do such things, and Maude said that she never would again, and called her her Fidelio; so then they kissed each other once more, and

several times after that, and then the bell rang for study-hours.

The summer term went fast, as summer terms are apt to go. It was too warm to live slowly and seriously. There was much fun, much frolic, few lessons, and less studying at the Golden Crescent through the golden days.

As for Gypsy, she lived, as the Gypsies will live in summer-time, in a sweet, lazy excitement of walks and drives, of concerts and serenades, of moonlight nights and novels and dreaming, with few distinct thoughts beyond.

One warm week towards the end of June, there was talk of a grand meeting of the Evergreen Sisters, which should be celebrated as the last for this term.

It would be, as Lou said, "too warm to eat so much in July, and then there were examinations to make ready for. Besides, the mosquitoes came in if you lighted a lamp."

Extensive preparations were made. Jo Courtis bought a freezer and made ice-cream in the cellar, explaining to Mrs. Holt that the

girls needed a little refreshment after study-hours — such abominable weather to have to apply one's mind!

Cake, candies, fruits, and pastry were ordered from Boston, and came as a private express-bundle to Mary Blunt.

Dolly was bribed to make a basketful of her inimitable wafers; for the material of which, at Gypsy's suggestion, Mrs. Holt was fairly paid. "To eat with the ice-cream, you know," explained Josephine, "and I will send you down a saucerful — if I don't forget it." This put Mrs. Holt into very good humour, and she neglected to tell Mrs. McMunn that the girls "would eat themselves sick and we should all have the cholery," as she had intended.

The trunk-closet was turned into a manufactory of whips and lemonade.

Finally, Jack Delancey was to send home for wines. Her father — a wealthy distiller — would supply her with whatever she wanted in that line.

"Wine!" exclaimed Gypsy. "Oh, don't!

I don't think it's right. Mother would n't want me to have anything to do with it, if you have such things. Come, girls, we don't want to turn it into a regular boy's class-supper, that way — please don't!"

But to turn it into a boy's class-supper was precisely what the girls did want, and Jacqueline sent for the wine. "If Mrs. McMunn finds it out," said Gypsy, "the Evergreen Sisters will be bounced up pretty fast." Gypsy felt uncomfortable about it. When she sat down for her night's talk with her mother by the window, she left out all about the Evergreen Sisters. I think she knew that she ought to stay away from the supper. But she did not stay away.

The night which they had chosen, was sultry and clouded. The teachers went to bed early. Even Miss Ayre had not the energy to climb upstairs and find out what was going on, when she heard the noise of preparation in the third story after study-hours.

Maude Clare wanted to sleep with Gypsy

that night, and, strange to say, Jane objected. She did not feel very well, or something, — indeed she had no definite reason, — but preferred to stay in her own room. Jane was usually the most accommodating girl in school.

"Why, it is n't a bit like you," said Gypsy, rather crossly. "I 'm sure you might oblige us when Maude wants to come so much."

"But why is she so anxious to come this particular night?" asked Jane, quietly.

"Because I am," snapped Maude, "and that 's reason enough."

Jane yielded the point with reluctance, and went down to Miss Holly.

The Evergreen Sisters met promptly in the trunk-closet, and for a while the supper passed off with great success. Mellow ice-cream, daintily shaped cream-cakes, pure white ladies' cakes, jelly-rolls that would melt in one's mouth, bananas from which the soft skin was bursting, strawberries wrapped in cool green leaves, rainbows of the "latest," candies in pretty painted boxes, and nobody there to

say that they were poison, Dolly's delicate wafers, and rich, yellow whips beaten to solid froth, — it was not a bill of fare to be despised.

But by and by Jacqueline brought on her wine. Gypsy did not like it, and she would not have touched it if she had, but there were enough who did.

They drank quite enough, too.

I am not proposing to state that these young ladies got drunk, but it is a simple fact that they became very noisy. Jo Courtis and Jacqueline thought it was "fun;" the well-bred girls, who had not exactly thought what it was that they were doing, began to look displeased, and fell silent one by one. Presently Jo took a little bunch of cigarettes from her pocket, and, lighting one with an ease which showed that it was not the first time, offered them, in her rough, hospitable way, to the rest.

Gypsy could stand it no longer. The disgusting scene had quite opened her eyes to the wrong that she had done in coming to the supper She had not, to be sure, expected

anything like this, but she should have guarded against it. What would her mother say? Oh, what would she?

She stood up with hot cheeks. "Girls, this is shameful, and I 'm sorry I ever came, and I 'm going right away!" — and walked straight to the door. Somebody on the other side opened it for her.

"There! We *are* bounced up!" said Gypsy, in a tone of calm despair. And in walked Mrs. McMunn.

Mrs. McMunn was utterly confounded. I believe it was five minutes by the clock before she found breath to say a word. That her young ladies — that any young ladies — should smoke cigarettes and drink champagne, was to the poor woman a revelation so stupendous that it stunned every idea of which she was the possessor.

When at last she found words, they were but two, but they were terrible.

"*Young* LADIES!"

"Ma'am?" said Josephine, faintly.

"You may go to your rooms. We will discuss this conduct at another time!"

They went to their rooms with hanging heads. The Principal saw them all out and shut the door. There is a tradition at the Golden Crescent that she and Mrs. Holt stayed up and finished the ice-cream, but you must refer to Miss Delancey for its authenticity.

That "other time" was deferred by an event for which both teacher and scholars were equally unprepared, and which threw the offence of the supper so much into the shade that none of the girls were ever punished as they deserved. I will pause to say here, however, lest there should not be another chance, that when the day of reckoning came, penitent Gypsy, without attempting to excuse herself or to shift the blame upon the other girls, gave her teacher to understand that she had had only the part of a spectator in the disgraceful scene upon which Mrs. McMunn had broken in; and that the Principal pardoned her with some good advice, which Gypsy sorrowfully remembered.

Maude Clare and Gypsy went directly to bed that night, and Gypsy directly to sleep. Owing to her excitement and weariness and supper, she slept heavily, disturbed only by broken dreams.

When she had been asleep some time — she learned afterward that it was about eleven

o'clock — she wakened from a dream that robbers were at the window, looked about her, and started up.

Maude Clare was not in the bed. She was not in the room.

Gypsy sprang to the window. There was a piazza roof running along the story below, and a wooden trellis for vines, nailed to the house, connected the window and the roof. Down the piazza pillars another trellis extended to the ground. A fearless person, if not too heavy, might climb down with safety.

The moon was struggling through a mass of clouds, and in the faint light Gypsy saw among the garden trees the flutter of a woman's dress.

Bewildered and trembling, all in a whirl of vague fear, Gypsy stood fixed upon the spot, with her eyes on the fluttering dress, when a hand touched her arm. She started with a cry of relief. Here was Maude, after all. How foolish she had been!

But it was not Maude. Jane Bruce stood there, her face as white as her nightdress.

"I was afraid of it, I was afraid of it! Oh, Gypsy, that's Maude Clare!"

Gypsy turned cold, and hot, and cold again.

"Jane, what shall we do? What shall we *do?*"

"Go after her," said Jane, promptly. "If we can get her back quietly, it will save Maude and the school so much disgrace; if not, we must call Mrs. McMunn. Here! put on your dress and slippers. Give me my wrapper from the closet, and shawl. Come now, quick! Down the back stairs! Oh, *don't* make a noise!"

Gypsy obeyed like a child, and they glided out, with breath held in, into the garden. It was sweet with the perfume of yellow June lilies, and the clovers were heavy with dew. It was very dark among the trees. The fluttering dress had disappeared. A figure — two figures were stealing up the street.

"Run!" said Jane. She and Gypsy began to run.

"This way! Along by the hedge! Don't

let them see till we have caught up with them."

"Jane," panted Gypsy, as they ran along, "how did you know?" Jane answered, between her breaths, —

"I knew that Maude was not to be trusted. I did n't like the looks of it — of her wanting to sleep in your room. I saw her talking with him down town a long time to-night. She has been to ride with him in the evening twice this term."

"You knew it, and never told — not even me!"

"I 'm not a tell-tale," said Jane, "but I mean to stop this Poor Maude, poor Maude! I am afraid it is worse than that."

That it was "worse than that" they found when, coming out at last into the open road in the now clear moonlight, they faced Maude Clare and young Sizer, standing by a horse and chaise.

Maude Clare saw them and screamed. Mr. Sizer expressed his sentiments in an oath.

"Maude," said Jane, stepping up with quiet authority, "come back. Come back with us."

"She sha'n't do any such thing!" said the collegian emphatically, taking Maude's gloved hand upon his arm.

"Maude, Maude, don't let him touch you!" cried Gypsy vehemently, springing forward. "Come back with me. Oh, what are you doing, Maude Clare?"

"I am going to be married," said Maude Clare, trying to put on her haughtiest look. "Mr. Sizer's father disapproves of the match; but when it is all over, he will relent, and then we are going home to mother's to make it all right with her. (Probably this plan would have been accurately carried out; the young fellow being simply weak and sentimental, like herself.) Mr. Sizer comes of a very good family, and I know she won't object after a while. I should like to know what business it is of yours, either, Gypsy Breynton, and I 'll thank you to —" But silly Maude's hauteur

broke into a sob, as Gypsy clung to her, pleading.

"See here," interrupted Maude's companion. "It seems to me this is my business, and I say she shall go. Come, Maude, it is n't safe to stand here. Jump in — quick!"

Jane, comprehending matters at the first glance, had seen that their hope of influencing Maude Clare was not worth an instant's delay, and had stolen swiftly back to the house for help. Gypsy was left alone to plead with her.

"Come, Maude, don't disgrace and make a fool of yourself — don't! Mr. Sizer, won't you just step into your chaise and take yourself off — no, I want Maude's hand on *my* arm. Come, Maude, come!"

Maude cried and hesitated, went a little way with her, — lingered, — stopped.

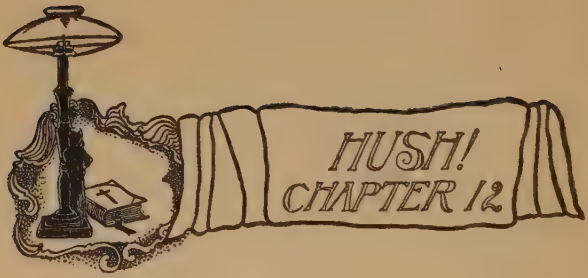
"Oh, *Maude!*" It seemed to Gypsy as if Jane would never be back; as if hours passed while Maude stood there sobbing.

"Maude, Maude!" called the voice from the chaise. Maude turned her head.

"Maude — Maude Clare! Maude Clare!"

"Oh, let me go, let me go!" cried Maude, and tore herself from Gypsy's arms to find herself in the stouter ones of Mrs. McMunn. Jane had roused the Principal, and the Principal had roused Chaplain Goss, and the three stood there together.

Mr. Sizer, his horse and chaise, disappeared somewhat faster than they had come, and Maude Clare was carried back to the Golden Crescent in hysterics.



MISS MAUDE CLARE SMITH was publicly expelled from the Golden Crescent.

Her father came, a stern, indignant man, and took her home. "His daughter would go back to her mother's nursery," he said, "and there she would stay till she gave evidence of having outgrown her childhood."

Unhappy Maude packed her trunks, and bade the girls good-by, and clung to Gypsy sobbing. "Her heart was broken, — she was sure her heart was broken, – and she should

never see a happy hour again, never! They had taken her away from Ben — poor fellow! she knew *his* heart would break too, and she should find in the papers some morning that he had drowned himself, or hung himself with a horrid rope — O–o–o–oh! — and now they were taking her away from Gypsy, the only friend she had who ever cared anything about her, and Gypsy did n't have half the sympathy with her that she expected; and oh, to think of never seeing Ben again! The Shadow of her Lifetime was darkening down, and there was nobody left to understand or appreciate. She wished she were dead, she did! — dead and buried up in a coffin, with her weary heart at rest! She thought she should n't live very long, either; and if Gypsy heard of her in consumption, she need n't be surprised."

Gypsy kissed her and cried a little, and when the carriage had fairly rolled away with her, went away alone upstairs, and cried a little more. But she was surprised to find that she did not feel as badly as she had expected to,

and that when Jane came in and kissed away her tears she was quite ready to be comforted.

The fact was, that Gypsy's respect for Maude Clare, which Maude herself had been slowly undermining bit by bit the last few months, was now gone "at one fell swoop," and love without respect is like a house without foundation. She felt sorry for Maude with a compassionate, superior sense of pity. Beautiful Queen Marie had lost her Fidelio; the sweet allegiance was broken; the pretty dream was gone. So she wiped her eyes, hoped Maude would not have consumption, and learned her Virgil lesson as if nothing had happened.

I will state, for the benefit of the compassionate, that Maude Clare did not have consumption, and I am really afraid that she has not had even the consistency to break her heart. For I read last week in the newspapers an account of a fashionable marriage at St. Paul's: "Miss Maude Clare, daughter of John Smith, Esq., of Boston, to Colonel —— Jones," I think, aide on a great General's staff.

Truth compels me to say, also, that Mr. Benjamin Sizer has as yet neither drowned himself nor hung himself with a horrid rope. When last heard from, he was cheerfully, and to all appearance resignedly, engaged in the

yacht-racing business, in which he was betting away his father's fortune as fast as he conveniently could. Owing to the fact that his latest-launched boat rejoices in the name of The Fair Sarah Popkins (reported to be that of a daughter of the Snapberry Town Over-

seer), I am driven to infer that not even the ghost of the memory of Mrs. Colonel Maude Clare Jones disturbs his peaceful dreams.

June days became July days, and it was warm weather at the Golden Crescent, — very warm. Lessons flagged; spirits drooped; girls who feasted on cream-cakes and lemonade at eleven o'clock at night, cried with headache all the next day; walks were few, and frolic less; the world gave itself up to gasping at open windows, and sighing for rain.

One morning Phœbe Hand did not come to recitation. She did not feel exactly well, Miss Ayre said. The next day she felt no better. Night came, and somebody went for the doctor. Morning came, and the girls clustered in groups, talking about her. At noon, a slow, low whisper went round from one to another.

"They say — hush!"

"He is afraid so — hush! There are some cases down town; don't speak of it."

"Awful! Why — hush! don't you know?"

It was curious how everybody hushed her own lips in speaking the word, as if she could not become used to or bear the sound of it. It came in time to Gypsy.

"What!"

"Yes. Varioloid."

Jacqueline Delancey took the first train for home. The other girls kept away from "The Parsonage," kept away from the lower floor; faces were pale, and the house was still.

"Her friends — send for her friends," said Jane. Mrs. McMunn, bewildered and frightened, acted on the suggestion, and the telegraph carried the news. Poor Phœbe had neither father nor mother to be moved to tender anxiousness by it. The crippled orphan was the charge of an uncle, who, to tell the truth, kept her at the Golden Crescent because he did not know what else to do with her. He wrote that he was sorry to hear of his niece's illness, and would come on, if there were any occasion; it was really impossible for him to break certain business engagements which

bound him for this week; he felt sure that there was no danger of "anything happening" to Phœbe, who had a strong constitution; but if there were any danger, he wished to be informed at once, and was Mrs. McMunn's very truly — Eliphalet Hand.

Miss Ayre moved upstairs with Mademoiselle. "She should be glad," she said, "to be of any assistance, and wished to do her duty, but felt that justice to the rest of the girls required that she should not expose herself rashly." Mrs. McMunn did the best that she could for Phœbe, but she was busy and frightened. They searched the town for a nurse who could not come till next week.

Upon this, Jane Bruce put on slippers and a soft dress, and went into the sick-room. Before she went, she kissed Gypsy and said good-by.

"Oh dear, how *can* she go?" cried the girls, in frightened groups; "she will have it, and we shall all have it and die."

But Gypsy held up her head, with bright

eyes, and only said: "I wish I were Jane Bruce; yes, I do. I call her a hero."

The very next morning the doctor said that it was only typhus fever. But I believe nobody thought that gentle Jane, who came out laughing and crying together to bring the news, was any the less a hero for that.

Phœbe was very sick. Gypsy went in several times to see her, but she was asleep or delirious.

"She does n't want to get well," said Jane one day, sadly; "and if we can't make her want to, I 'm afraid she won't."

"Does n't want to get well!"

Happy Gypsy, to whom life was as sweet as love, and the future as bright as a dream, opened her great eyes wide.

"No; she is n't afraid to die, she thinks she should be happier in heaven, poor thing! I 'm afraid Phœbe has n't had a pleasant time in this world."

Gypsy, making pretence to study through the long days (nobody made anything but pre-

tence to study, just now), thought about this. Poor Phœbe! Why did n't people *make* her have a pleasant time? Well, why? She — why she, Gypsy Breynton, it had not been *her* business, had it? Whose, then? If anybody's, why not hers? If Jane's, why not hers? What was that about "Whatsoever thy hand findeth"? She could not remember the rest; but the words were in her mind, and they turned themselves about.

Phœbe was worse. The girls in their groups grew grave; stepped about the house on tip-toe; spoke in whispers. Miss Ayre, looking a little ashamed of herself, came down into the sick-room and went to work. The uncle was sent for. The doctor came twice, three times, four times a day.

One afternoon Jane came out crying, and Gypsy tried some time to find out what was the matter.

"Poor thing, poor thing!" said Jane, at last. "She says she has been here a year and a half, and nobody has been sorry for her, — nobody but me."

Gypsy flushed to her forehead, and drew her breath in fast. She did not answer Jane, but walked away and sat down alone. She felt as if she were sitting alone in the world, and One with finger pointed at her asked a question: "Why was nobody sorry for her? Why?"

That night the sleepers at the Golden Crescent were awakened by a sudden cry. Lights flickered past the windows, and quick steps sounded on the stairs, and presently silence fell again, and sleep.

But in the morning the girls, with awestruck faces, heard that one lay dead in the house.

Mr. Eliphalet Hand came by the early express, and with decorous, grave face wished that he had been sent for sooner. Jane was busy with flowers, and tried, she said, "to have things look as if the poor child's mother were there to attend to them."

Gypsy, still feeling as if that Finger pointed at her and her only, in all the world, went in by herself to look at Phœbe's quiet face.

The uncle, with crape upon his hat, took

away what was left of her, to his expensive lot in Laurel Hill, and went back to those business engagements which her death had so inconsiderately broken in upon.

The girls, as is the way with girls, now that Phœbe was dead, were convinced that they had always been very fond of her, and cried for her profusely.

Jane mourned her as a valued friend, and Gypsy thought of her as an accusing angel.

"If she had only got well, Jane! I *would* have been sorry for her!"

"But is n't it a great deal better to be *glad* for her now, dear?" said Jane, looking off at the serene summer sky.

MISS AYRE has the typhus fever. People wonder a little, and wish that the weather would cool. The days grow hotter; the nights are sultrier; Lou Armstrong complains of a headache. One morning Lou has the typhus fever. The doctor looks grave, but is not surprised; it is an old trick of the typhus — "Not contagious, ma'am, not contagious; but an epidemic, without doubt. Let the young ladies keep as much as possible out of doors, and I would not advise their running in and out of the sick-room unless they can be of some use." There is little need of any such advice, did the excellent doctor but know it.

"The young ladies" are, if possible, more frightened than at the varioloid rumour, and the closest friendships will be severely tried if there is much more of this.

But Lou is not very sick, and Miss Ayre is better, and the fickle disease has about made up its mind to take a quiet departure, but pounces on one most unsuspecting little victim, by way of farewell.

Gypsy, worn with the excitement of the term, and the heat, and the little shock that Phœbe's death had given, wakes up one morning feeling very weak, and thinks that she will not go into Shakespeare.

After dinner, Jane finds her with aching head, and cheeks on fire; and at night Mrs. McMunn thinks that the doctor had better just step in and look at her.

The doctor steps in to look at her, and Gypsy is too sleepy to ask him what he thinks. She sees him pour out some medicine and go away, and by and by she tells Jane that she does not need anything; she wishes that she

would go down and sleep with Miss Holly, and get a good night's rest. But Jane does not go.

Gypsy feels too weak to argue the matter, and the long night sets in. It is a very long night. The lamp is left lighted, and she sees the shadows flicker on the wall; sees Jane lying quietly at her side, wondering a little if she wakes her every time she turns over, tries to lie still, but turns and turns again. She sees strange shapes gliding slowly over the ceiling, walking beside and around the bed, and cries out sometimes when they touch her. She calls — she is afraid that she calls very often for water, and drinks fast, and drains the glass. She wonders what time it is, and if the night will ever be gone, and if she shall have an excuse from composition, and who kindled that fire in her head that crackles so. What did they want of a fire in such warm weather? And how did they ever put in the kindling-wood? By and by, she sees the lamp burn pale and blue, and thinks that it must be morning, and wonders if the rising-bell has rung,

and wonders what they sent the doctor in here for before she was dressed.

After that, she does not wonder any more. The hot sun rises and rides on; sinks, rises, sinks again, like the great brass pendulum of a clock — how many times she does not know — but she neither wonders, nor thinks, nor cares.

The doctor is there, and Mademoiselle is there, and Mrs. McMunn is there. Mrs. McMunn has an inconvenient way of turning into a Baldwin apple whenever she passes in front of the window, and Gypsy is uncomfortable because she cannot twist the stem off.

It occurs to her once, when she is drinking her medicine, that it may not be a stem, after all, but a waterfall. Mademoiselle cries in the corner, and sometimes she kisses Gypsy softly. Jane is always there. Jane opens the windows, Jane brings her medicine, Jane fixes the ice upon her forehead. At sunset and at sunrise Jane's face moves about in a cloud of pallid gold, like a face in an old picture. Gypsy watches it idly, and idly thinks of Peace May-

thorne, and wonders what makes the two look so much alike; and if Peace, away in heaven, knows anything about the Golden Crescent, and how hot the sun is here, and how long the nights.

They have sent for her mother, though that she does not know. But the letter missed, and the telegram was delayed; it is many days before she comes, and still Jane moves about the room in the cloud of pallid gold.

One night the doctor stands with his back to the bed, talking with Mrs. McMunn. Gypsy has a dim idea that they think she is asleep, and dimly she seems to hear him say, —

"The case disappoints me. The chances of recovery are ve–ry small."

But she does not think much about it, nor care. Presently Jane comes in crying, and she wonders what is the matter with her. Perhaps *she* has the headache, too.

The great brass pendulum has swung up and swung down once after that, over the crescent of green maples, and then the door is opened

as nobody has opened the door since Gypsy has lain there, and some one lies down softly by her on the pillow, and lips touch her forehead as no lips have touched her all the summer long.

"Ye-es," Gypsy says sleepily; "that is nice. My head ached so last night, I could n't talk with you. I 've been a little — a horrid little villain — all this" — the thought wanders away, and the lips kiss down the words with their rare touch, and all the world seems to grow cool and green and still.

After a time, it may be longer or shorter, a thought comes to Gypsy; it is sharp and clear; it strikes her as if steel struck her, and she cries out with it.

"Oh, mother, mother, mother! I don't want to die! I don't *want* to die!"

Her mother's arms just gather her in and hold her, and nobody says a word.

It was Mademoiselle over in her corner, who sobbed aloud. Mademoiselle hovers about the bed in these days, with red eyes and gentle

touch; begs leave to change the ice and bring fresh water; sends Jane and the worn mother away to rest; insists on taking the night-watch and running for the doctor. Poor Mademoiselle carries her rosary in her hand, and tells over Aves and Paternosters between the drops of medicine, wetting the beads with tears.

But by and by the brass pendulum ceases to swing over the maple, and the world goes out.

ONE morning it moves again a little, — slowly, faintly ; the leaves of the Crescent shine out beyond the window ; Jane's face, and every face, glides about again in pallid gold.

So Gypsy cries for very weakness and thankfulness and joy, and cries herself to sleep.

They do not let her talk for many days, but one morning, feeling very bright and strong after her beef tea, she wakes from a bit of a nap, and finds Mademoiselle sitting alone by her bed. Mademoiselle is correcting exercises, with her rosary twined about her wrist.

Gypsy watches her for a while in thoughtful silence, and suddenly raises herself a little on her elbow, and speaks, —

"Mademoiselle!"

"Oh! Why, Miss Gypsy! You must n't talk, my dear."

"Yes, I must talk, Mademoiselle. My fate cries out against this deaf and dumb treatment, and makes each petty artery in this body as hardy as the Nemean lion's nerves!" (Shakespeare.) "So, if you please, I want you to listen to me, and answer me a question."

"Very well, my dear; if la bonne mère will not —"

"Oh, la bonne mère won't say a word. Now, Mademoiselle, I want to know what ever made you take a fancy to such a hor–rid little thing, and come in and take care of me this way while I 've been sick."

Mademoiselle drops the exercises, and her eyelids quiver a little, —

"N'importe, n'importe, my dear. I like you C'est assez, n' est-ce pas?"

"I suppose it will have to be *assez*, if you have n't any better reason."

"Mais! I have one reason," said Mademoiselle, in a low tone. "Hélas! Pauvre moi! pauvre moi!"

Gypsy watched the French teacher in compassionate wonder. What was she "poor" for? Did *she* need anybody to be sorry for her, too? "I wonder," she said softly.

"I go to tell you," said Mademoiselle, squeezing her handkerchief into her eyes, — "I go to tell you in a minute. Il fait mal aux yeux, this writing. Voilà! You care to hear then about poor Mademoiselle, — you? I think nobody care to hear about Mademoiselle."

Gypsy turned upon the pillow restlessly.

"It is one little story," said Mademoiselle, half under her breath. "One très little story. I tell it in not many words. I have one petite sœur — one little sister; just one little sister. I have no thing else. I leave la mère et le père in two graves at Havre. La petite sœur, she is all there is left. We come to Amèrique

deux ans, two years ago. La petite sœur look like you — hair, eyes, mouth — she look like you. I love la petite sœur, — I love you."

"And where is she, the little sister?" asked Gypsy, waiting for more. "Why did n't she come here with you? Is she dead?"

"Ah, mon Dieu, non," said Mademoiselle, very low. "If it were that she were dead, I go not to cry so many tears in the dark. Pauvre petite! She have one fine voice, elle aime chanter et danser; she not let me pay monaie for the books and clothes here at the school. She go to — to — what you call it? to support herself at the Opéra. I write the letters to her. She write to me. Last winter I write très manier lettres, but I nevaire hear one word. I go to Boston to the Opéra, and they tell me she have gone. She have run away. I nevaire find her. I nevaire see her any more. Pauvre petite sœur! I am très lonely. Nobodie speak to me or cry with me. Mademoiselle Bruce is ver kind, ver kind, but

I tell not her about la petite sœur. I tell not anybodie. Mais! que c'est triste, cela!"

Gypsy's pillow was wet and salt, and Gypsy's face was hidden.

"Mademoiselle?" she said softly.

"Well, my dear."

"I want you to kiss me."

Mademoiselle climbed upon the bed, and put her arms about Gypsy's neck, and kissed her sobbing.

"Make believe I *am* la petite sœur, all good and safe and happy, just for a minute, Mademoiselle. Come, I will kiss you. Did she kiss you so?"

Poor Mademoiselle cried very hard, and Gypsy let her, thinking it was best. By and by, when she grew quiet, Gypsy lay back wearily upon the pillow and said, —

"Mademoiselle, would you please to forgive me!"

"Forgive! Ma chère, I have no thing to forgive, moi!"

"Yes, you have," said Gypsy, decidedly.

"*I* know, if you don't. I know that if I had n't been just a selfish old thing, bent on having a good time, I might have made you tell me about the petite sœur long ago, and I might have gone up and cried with you in the dark, and you 'd have felt better, would n't you, Mademoiselle? Yes, I know you would, and now it 's all over and gone, and too late, and everything, and perhaps I sha'n't come back to the Golden Crescent, and — oh, dear! Mademoiselle, *will* you write to me, and let me write to you, and let me try to make up ever so little bit?"

Poor Mademoiselle tried with grateful tears to speak, but Mrs. Breynton came in just then, and the talk was broken up.

Gypsy said nothing about it to any one for a while, but one day, — one of the cooler days in which her strength came fast, — finding herself alone for an hour with Jane, she intrusted to her confidence the story of the poor little sister who "have run away."

"Poor Mademoiselle, poor Mademoiselle!

And to think I never noticed nor thought! It just fits in with Phœbe, under that Finger that kept pointing before I was sick. Jane Bruce,

I wonder what has been the matter with me this year?"

Jane kissed her, smiling, but did not answer.

"And here you come on top of it all," said

Gypsy, trying to laugh, but winking savagely. "You — you blessed old dear! I should call you a saint, only I never had but one saint, and that was my poor Peace Maythorne, long ago at home; such a sweet, lame girl, Jane, and she is dead, you know, so nobody else can be just *that.* But you *are* a blessed old girl, and I 've been all the whole year finding it out. I was so taken up with Maude Clare, and you did n't say much; why did n't you talk to me, as you did with some of the others?"

"I thought you did not care about it, you know; I did not want to be in the way," said Jane, in a tone of quiet self-respect. Gypsy's pale cheeks crimsoned faintly.

"The little vil —"

But Jane kissed away the rest of the word.

"Well, I 've found you out now, and if I ever let you go again, you 'll know it! And so many nights as I left you to walk by yourself, or all alone after study-hours! Jane, dear, I wish you would tell me now, if you don't mind, about your black dress."

It was not all neglect on Gypsy's part, that she had never asked this question before. Girls, and such merry girls, shrink from the sight of distress that they can neither understand nor help. Then Jane had kept her sadness very quietly to herself; it was something of which she neither sought nor cared to speak.

Jane was still for a moment after Gypsy spoke, and then she crept upon the bed, lying so that Gypsy could not see her face.

"Just my brother, dear. All the brother I ever had. He was in the army. There 's nobody now but mamma and me. He has been gone two years, and sometimes, Gypsy — oh, sometimes, it seems as if it were only two days! I do not know that it will ever seem any more. I am afraid I shall never get used to it. When I first came, I *could n't* laugh and play round with the rest, and I used to stay up here alone; there was nobody to find that out and stop me, but by and by I thought perhaps he would n't like it; perhaps I was disappointing him a little; so I tried to cheer

up, and go about and listen to the girls. After that, I did n't seem to be of so much consequence, you know, and it was easier. It 's never the less lonely if one thinks, but one need n't think *all* the time, you see, dear."

Something in the quiet voice with which these words were spoken, awed Gypsy. It made her feel weak and small and young. She felt by an instinct, that she had no word of help for Jane; Jane was older than she, as well as better; so she tried to comfort her only by touch and silence.

"If you had only told me! If I had only let you tell me!" she said at last. "I don't suppose that it could have made any difference to *you*, except that I should have loved you the very first minute I heard it — but it would have made me remember; it would have carried me back; it would have stopped me. Jane Bruce, I believe I 've found out what is part of the matter with me this year; why, I 've been just like a silly little canary, that finds the cage door open, and flies out and loses his way;

why, I have n't learned my lessons, nor thought of a thing but taffy, and Maude Clare, and good times."

"Why?"

"Well, I 'm not just sure of the word, you see. Hand me the dictionary, will you?"

Jane brought the dictionary, laughing, and Gypsy looked into it, and shut it up with a snap.

"Reback, — why, no! Let me see. Reaction. That 's it. Reaction."

Jane did not understand.

"Well, I mean you shall. I believe I 've bounced up like a ball, from that year when I had to think and plan and worry about Tom. I never told you — no, and I wish I had. Sometime when I am stronger, perhaps I will. But it was a year I don't like to remember, and I felt as if I had been stretched on pulleys at the end of it. He went to the war, too, at the last, and *he* came home; but I thought once he never would, so you see, Jane, I know how to be a little bit sorry. May I kiss you?"

"A wasted year!" said Gypsy, half to herself, after a silence. "A whole, long, wasted year! That's what it is. Lessons, and Phœbe, and Mademoiselle, and you; and I don't doubt fifty other things that I haven't found out. If I could creep back into some little corner of an October day, without anybody's knowing it, and begin all over again! Jane Bruce!"

"Why, Gypsy, you look frightened."

"What do you suppose becomes of a wasted year, when you get through with all the years? I believe I am frightened."

"Perhaps one might do enough in another year to — well, I suppose not make up, exactly, but something like it," said Jane, thinking.

"Anyway," observed Gypsy, after a pause, "I've found out who Number 1 is, and I should like to tell Maude Clare so."

"Number 1?"

"Yes. Curing headaches, being sorry for this girl, and glad for that girl, and not

ashamed to say the other girl does wrong. Going to walk with poor dead lame girls. Oh, I don't mean they were dead *when* they went to walk, dear. Being 'ver' kind' to Mademoiselle; learning your lessons; behaving; walking right up to an awful varioloid that nobody else would go near. Nursing a little villain till you're as white as a ghost. Always some other people; never yourself. That is what I call Number 1."

"I don't understand," said puzzled Jane.

"That is quite likely, my dear." Gypsy is fairly tired out by this time, and falls asleep before Jane can ask another question.

Time slips away fast when one is getting well; Gypsy can hardly believe her senses when she finds herself one bright morning dressed, and packed, and starting for home. Her mother, not quite satisfied with the management at the Golden Crescent, has told her that she will probably not come back; so this is a last good-by.

Mrs. McMunn, with her waterfall more

crooked than ever, is sorry to part with her, very; she has been a good pupil, with the exception of a little levity, very natural, I 'm sure, Mrs. Breynton, to her years; and she would like to kiss her good-by if Miss Gypsy has no objections.

Josephine Courtis sheds a few honest tears, and apologises for them in a little slang. Jack Delancey (whose parents sent her back when the varioloid turned out to be typhus) exhibits her diamond deftly in shaking hands, wondering if Mrs. Breynton notices it. Lou Armstrong, and "poor Miss Holly," the Colchetts, and all the girls are there upon the steps to see her off; they are going themselves most of them to-day, for the term is over. Mary Blunt tucks a paper of peppermint in through the carriage window at the last minute, and is "sorry that she has n't some nut-candy; but the nut-candy is in a state of compound fracture, — a little accident; Mrs. Holt sat down on it."

Mademoiselle says good-by sadly, and calls

Gypsy her "*petite sœur, ma chère petite*," and reminds her of the letters that are to be written.

Miss Ayre extends the tip of a cold hand, and hopes that Miss Breynton will review her Latin grammar through the vacation; it will be excellent practice.

Mrs. Holt and Dolly and Nancy look on in the background, and Mr. Schleiermacher and the Chaplain were taken leave of last night.

Nobody remains but Jane, standing by the carriage, who has a long kiss all to herself, but not a sorrowful one; for Jane is to make a visit at Yorkbury the last of August, and that is not long to wait.

So the carriage rumbles away, and the figures on the steps grow dim, and the Golden Crescent is out of sight at last.

Gypsy is inclined to stop the coachman and turn about to tell Dolly that she may have that crinoline, and ask the girls if they are not seriously glad to be rid of such a horrid — but her mother thinks that they might be late to the train.

"Is n't it going to tire you all out to travel with a little villain so far?" asks Gypsy, leaning back on the cushioned seat to hide rather a regretful face; she has had a pleasant time at the Golden Crescent, after all.

Her mother thinks that she can, by making up her mind to it, endure the little villain, at least for a day; so presently they reach the station, and the train is just coming in.

Gypsy, turning to take a last look at Snapberry through the car-window, sees the little coachman twirling his moustache, and Mr. Short giving Colonisation tracts to Deacon Popkins. The Deacon catches sight of her as the train puffs off, and throws himself back in his buggy, and laughs till he cries; which I believe that excellent Town Officer has never failed to do, every time he has seen her, since the day on which they went to the Poor-house together.

The Deacon is out of sight now, and the roof of the Golden Crescent, and the last traces of Snapberry. Gypsy says Hurrah for

home, and her magnificent old mountains! then wants to know if that is slang; is sure that she never shall learn to be proper, and is convinced that she is a hopeless case, and ought to be pinched a little. So she pinches herself a little, and then down goes her head — a bit tired — upon her mother's shoulder, and she wanders away into a wide-awake dream of sweet content.